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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

IMAGES OF THE CANADIAN WEST, 1872 - 1911

by

Ⓒ SUSAN JACKEL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Images of the Canadian West, 1872 - 1911, submitted by Susan Jackel, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

The narrative of travel and adventure is a prose form closely associated with the early years of the opening of the Canadian west to settlement. In the decades surrounding the Transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada in 1869, several widely-read accounts of travel in the region -- principally, W. F. Butler's The Great Lone Land and G. M. Grant's Ocean to Ocean -- acquainted large numbers of readers in the English-speaking world with characteristic aspects of the Northwest and its inhabitants.

According to Edward McCourt, "Prairie literature properly begins with the nineteenth-century travellers and explorers." While McCourt's assertion seems probable enough in general terms, it is the purpose of the present study to demonstrate in detail the line of literary influence connecting the travel books of W. F. Butler, G. M. Grant, and a turn-of-the-century practitioner of the form, John McDougall. McDougall's six books of reminiscences describing his life in the Northwest during the years when, as he wrote, "Still this was the great lone land," offer travel and adventure in abundance. What they also offer, however, is a means of understanding the values and aspirations of two formative generations in western Canadian society: the decades of the 1860's

and '70's, when the western interior of Canada was in transition, and the years leading up to World War I, when massive immigration into Canada forced re-examination of national and regional identity.

This dissertation, then, has a dual objective. The first is to provide a chapter in the literary history of western Canada, through an examination of the various connections between British and Canadian books of travel in the Northwest. The second is to demonstrate the extent to which literary assessment of a transitional prose form depends upon familiarity with the broader historical context of a given work's composition and publication. Since the narrative of travel and adventure is a prose form which likewise exhibits a dual nature, at once document and artifact, it seems only appropriate that analysis of the form should take into account both historical and literary procedures and values.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

W. F. Butler:

GLL: *The Great Lone Land* (1872)

WNL: *The Wild North Land* (1873)

RC: *Red Cloud, The Solitary Sioux* (1882)

G. M. Grant:

OTO: *Ocean to Ocean* (1873)

John McDougall:

GMM: *George Millward McDougall* (1888)

FLP: *Forest, Lake and Prairie* (1895)

SSS: *Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe* (1896)

PPP: *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie* (1898)

RRR: *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion* (1903)

WM: *"Wa-pee Moos-tooch," or, "White Buffalo"* (1908)

OWT: *On Western Trails in the Early Seventies* (1911)

OGW: *Opening the Great West* (1970)

O sir, we quarrel in print, by the book; as you have books for good manners: I will name you the degrees. The first, the Retort Courteous; the second, the Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Countercheck Quarrelsome; the sixth, the lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct. All these you may avoid, but the Lie Direct; and you may avoid that too with an "if". . . . Your "if" is the only peacemaker; much virtue in "if".

As You Like It, V, iv.

I

INTRODUCTION

Western settlement is part of our past; but only in the last ten years or so has it become part of our usable past. Despite several decades of careful accounting, by statisticians, social scientists and others, of the formation of social, economic and political institutions in the prairie west of Canada, it has been left to the present generation of writers to place the theme of 'the west and the nation' before the consciousness of the Canadian clerisy, the educated but non-academic reading -- and book-buying -- public.

It was for this readership that Douglas Hill, for example, researched and wrote The Opening of the Canadian West, published in 1967. This book represents Hill's attempt to "translate" (his own word) the findings of scholarly writers into dramatic and attention-getting narrative, a form of historical reconstruction which he calls "the near-mythology of 'living' history, the true basis of viable national traditions."[1] Hill's chapter-headings hint at the high-spots of his drama: "Fortunes in Furs," "To Make a Nation," "The Far and Golden West," "The Great Lone Land," all the way down to "Finishing Touches" and "The New Century."

Perhaps the best gauge, however, of the recent upsurge in demand for near-mythology among readers in Canada on the subject of western settlement is one of the best-sellers of the 1970's, Pierre Berton's The Great Railway. In Berton's two-volume saga of the years of the C. P. R.'s construction, history and biography converge. Berton makes no secret of the fact that he finds the main attraction of history not in the interplay of ideologies and economic forces, nor in the random catastrophes of human experience, but in the exhibition of personality. His is primarily "living" history because he has a superabundant appreciation for the individual who rises above the faceless crowd. So The National Dream opens with a "Cast of Major Characters": The Politicians, The Pathfinders, The Entrepreneurs, The Builders, The Bystanders. Sandford Fleming and Charles Horetzky appear as Pathfinders; among the Bystanders are George Grant, author of Ocean to Ocean, the botanist John McCoun, and Father Albert Lacombe, "Oblate Missionary, whose parish was the Far West."

Not a major character, certainly, but a fascinating one for Berton nonetheless, was William Francis Butler. Three full pages of The National Dream are given over to resumé and quotation of Butler's travel book of 1872, The Great Lone Land.[2] Unsurprisingly, it is the engaging persona conducting the narrative who appears as the historical Butler in Berton's redaction of events, the "dashing and romantic Irishman," "hot-blooded and impulsive," who was "prepared to travel by foot, horseback and dog sled across four thousand miles of uninhabited wilderness" on a half hour's notice. Berton quotes Butler's scene-setting summary of his impending adventure -- "Behind me lay friends and news of friends, civilization, tidings of a terrible war, firesides, and houses; before me lay unknown savage tribes, long days of saddle-travel, long nights of chilling bivouac, silence, separation and space!" -- and remarks, as a comment on the prose of this passage, "Butler loved every minute of it." And as Berton candidly acknowledges, readers of the period loved every minute of The Great Lone Land.

> It was his subsequent book, The Great Lone Land, with its haunting descriptions of "that great, boundless, solitary waste of verdure" that caught the public's imagination. The title went into the language of the day. For the next fifteen years, until the railway made the land lone no longer, no description, no reference, no journalistic report about the North West seemed complete without some mention of Butler's poetic title. It was as well that the CPR was built when it was; long before the phrase was rendered obsolete, it had become a cliché.

"But Butler's description of what he saw and felt on that chill, solitary trek across the white face of the new Canada will never be hackneyed," Berton continues, pausing to quote the major portion of the famous "prairie-ocean" passage from The Great Lone Land. Berton concludes, "His book was his monument and his closing words rang down the corridor of the decade like a trumpet call: 'Midst the smoke and hum of cities, midst the prayer of churches, in street or salon, it needs but little cause to recall again to the wanderer the image of the immense meadows where, far away at the portals of the setting sun, lies the Great Lone Land.'"

As a statement of historical fact, Berton's estimate of The Great Lone Land's immense popularity is beyond dispute. The title of Butler's travel narrative did indeed go into the language of the day. One encounters the phrase in every conceivable kind of publication about the Northwest, not only throughout the decade of the 1870's but throughout the entire settlement period. By the turn of the century, it is true, journalists and travellers were beginning to comment on the growing inapplicability of the phrase. One, for example, wrote in 1903 of "the conversion of the 'Great Lone Land' into settled and prosperous provinces" in the eighteen years since the completion of the C. P. R.[3] Yet the cliché persisted, as clichés have a way of doing, and persisted with such force that one must acknowledge the considerable importance of Butler's book among publications which influenced, directly or indirectly, public attitudes towards Canada's western interior, and consequently played some historical role in shaping the actual course of settlement.

The precise nature and extent of Butler's influence on the formation of a public image of the Canadian west, we can never know with certainty. One can approach some general measurement of The Great Lone Land's potential impact on population movement into the west through statistics concerning its publishing history: the knowledge, for example, that it ran through four printings in England alone in the space of a year, with additional printings, to a total of nineteen, being issued steadily throughout the settlement period up to 1924. An unrecorded number of editions have also been issued by American and Canadian publishers. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that upwards of several hundred thousand English-speaking readers knew the book at first hand during the half-century following its original publication in 1872.

Moreover, familiarity with the published accounts of emigrants to the west uncovers scattered but convincing evidence that The Great Lone Land did in fact turn the attention of many readers in Canada, Great Britain and the United States towards the Northwest of Canada, at the very time when an inflow of population into the region was being vigorously solicited by Canadian authorities. In May 1880, for example, the Mooney family of Grey County, Ontario took the steamer from Owen Sound bound for Manitoba, their decision to try the new frontier having been formed at least in part by "a book about a trip made with a dog, from Fort Garry away west, and it's a wonderful country, he says; the man's name is Butler."[4] As late as 1918 a British emigrant, Edward West, expressed his admiration for "that fine book, The Great Lone Land."[5] These are only two of dozens of such references to Butler's "poetic title," as Pierre Berton styles it, which one can collect from contemporary publications. Consequently, if we can judge by the durability and widespread appeal of Butler's title phrase, his narrative of travel in the Northwest was nothing less than a bona fide event in the social and political history of this country, by virtue of its propaganda value for a relatively unknown territory.

In the opinion of western Canada's first and still most influential literary historian, The Great Lone Land was an event in the region's cultural history as well. "Prairie literature properly begins with the nineteenth century travellers and explorers -- Southesk, Palliser, Butler, Cheadle and a dozen more," wrote Edward McCourt, in one of the last essays composed before his death in

1972. And McCourt went on to complain: "So far the self-told tales of these early prairie travellers have largely been ignored, either as literature in their own right, or as a possible influence on the attitude of prairie pioneers towards the land they settled, and thus indirectly on what the pioneers and their descendants wrote."[6] What was true when McCourt wrote these words in 1971 is still true six years later. The relation of early prose writing about the prairies by residents of the region, to nineteenth century narratives of travel and adventure, has yet to be clearly defined. It is the purpose of the present study to attempt such definition: to show literary and cultural history in process, as it takes shape in the minds and words of historic individuals.

Several years' practical engagement with the large body of prose publications connected with Canada's Northwest prior to World War I has made abundantly clear why the self-told tales of early prairie travellers should have been so long ignored by students of our collective past. To follow the clue that Edward McCourt provides is to discover that his either/or proposition is in fact a very complicated one, more complicated, perhaps, than McCourt himself may have realized. If, for example, we wish to evaluate the writings of nineteenth-century travellers in the west as "literature in their own right," we have to answer two important questions: "Whose literature?" and "In what way literary?" But if we then go on to consider their "possible influence on the attitude of prairie pioneers towards the land they settled, and thus indirectly on what the pioneers and their descendants wrote," we enter into a region where speculation is infinitely easier than documentation. Writers and readers are so diverse, and their interactions so difficult to know with certainty, that answers involving the general run of pioneers and their descendants are risky business at best. Where influences are merely "possible" and "indirect," the literary historian can stray far from the path of methodological virtue.

These dangers notwithstanding, I propose in the course of this dissertation to describe and document one such line of influence in the early literature of the Canadian west. In several of the chapters to follow, aspects of literary practice -- primarily, questions of theme, structure, narrative persona and prose style will stand at the centre of the discussion. Yet to approach the travel narrative solely as a literary form is to answer only one of the two questions raised by this body of writing. In order to answer the other, it becomes necessary to widen the enquiry to include the broader historical context of a given work's composition and publication -- a requirement which takes on particular urgency when, as in the present case, the line of influence being traced involves a personal confrontation between two writers, of divergent national, social and religious affiliations, which had measurable results for the definition of Canadian beliefs and aspirations at the century's turn. On such occasions, we find that answers to the question, "In what way literary?" inevitably leads to a consideration of the question, "Whose literature?" In sum, the main contention of this study is that prairie literature does indeed find its sources in the books of nineteenth-century British travellers: but not in so straightforward a manner as McCourt's brief comment implies.

McCourt's essay on "Prairie Literature and its Critics," after making note of the importance of books by nineteenth-century travellers in the west, turns directly to another group of writers, the missionaries. The publications of this group, McCourt writes, were "distinguished by their voluminousness rather than literary craftsmanship." Of their number, however, he singles out one for special comment. "John McDougall," he writes, "who took the entire prairie region for his parish, offers the most substantial evidence that he who runs may write -- his books take up several feet of library shelving. Many of his books he wrote with a down-east Methodist reading public in mind; none the less they deserve a more detailed and critical examination than his biographer [John Maclean] gives them."[7] McCourt's juxtaposition here of these two groups of writers, travellers and missionaries, may well have been fortuitous. In the present study, the connections drawn between them, and in particular between two representative writers from among their number, will be entirely by design. Of all the travel narratives about the pre-settlement Canadian west, William Francis Butler's The Great Lone Land has had the widest circulation and the most enduring readership through time; and of all the missionaries' accounts of the same period in the west's development, John McDougall's have been the most seriously undervalued, both as literature and as documentary sources for the writing of history.

Yet the connections which I wish to see drawn between W. F. Butler and John McDougall amount to more than a question of disproportionate reputations. For there is, in my view, evidence to support the hypothesis that Butler's travel writing played that classic part in the cultural awakening of a developing community, the role of provocateur, of sting and spur to the individual and communal self-respect of one of the western region's more articulate residents. I believe that Butler, performing in this role, helped to provoke John McDougall to commit himself to print: first in a biography of his father, George Millward McDougall, and then in a series of autobiographical volumes which enjoyed a wide readership in Canada at the century's turn. Whether the working out of this hypothesis, as pursued in the present study, is best described as literary history or literary biography, is a question which may occur to the reader of these pages. It is my own impression, however, that prolonged and intimate acquaintance with the documentary record of a particular time and place -- a record which includes the kinds of transitional literary activities represented by the narrative of travel and adventure -- involves the writer in something which bears a very close resemblance to cultural history.

With the intention, therefore, of suggesting the grounds for such a conclusion, I shall proceed, in Chapter II to follow, to focus on some of the primary themes of western cultural development in the late nineteenth century. My purpose in this chapter is simply to raise issues germane to the study as a whole: in particular, the relation of a given writer to his society, and, arising from this relation, the consequent obligation on the literary historian to keep open channels of communication with other branches of historical writing. While the reader may find this initial chapter rather more broadly inclined towards historiographical considerations than issues in literary criticism, he or she should be assured that this aberration, while a continuing characteristic of the dissertation throughout, is directed towards concerns which ultimately bear on methods and standards for the recognition, analysis and evaluation of literary procedures.

Chapter III broaches an example of how the general concerns identified in Chapter II can be applied to an individual writer: in the first instance, William Francis Butler. It is a hazard attached to the travel narrative as a prose genre that, being neither fish nor flesh nor good red herring, it falls an easy victim to misinterpretation by both the historian and the critic of literature; and in Chapter III, Edward McCourt himself conveniently provides the case in point. McCourt has made two specific judgments on Butler's achievement in The Great Lone Land: that the book is at one and the same time "a classic of travel literature," and "a record of prime importance to the student of Western Canadian history." With both these judgments, writers of history aimed at a general readership are apt to agree -- witness the alacrity with which Douglas Hill and Pierre Berton have seized on Butler's narrative of travel to lend colour and tone to their respective histories of the opening of the Canadian west. Scholarly writers such as A. S. Morton and W. L. Morton have taken an opposite view, however. Neither as documentary record nor as literary classic does Butler's best-known book impress these historians, a fact which suggests that there are other criteria being applied here than those used by Hill, Berton and McCourt. What stands in immediate need of clarification, then, is the basis on which evaluation of the travel narrative form can proceed, both as document and as artifact.

Chapters IV and V need little prior explanation at this juncture, consisting of fairly straightforward application of standard critical procedures to The Great Lone Land as a literary form. Questions of characterization, theme, structure and style form the backbone of these chapters. My object in providing this analysis, however, is rather more devious than the student of literature might at first suppose; and this object will begin to become apparent in Chapter VI.

Chapter VI forms a 'bridge' in the study in more than one way. To see G. M. Grant's Ocean to Ocean as a means of shifting the focus from the British to the Canadian versions of the travel narrative form, is hardly an original observation -- Pierre Berton saw the same opportunity, and used it in The National Dream. Berton also suggests, however, a further sense in which Grant forms a link between the kind of book which Butler consciously prepared with "the English reader" in mind, and the variety of travel narrative which John McDougall thought more appropriate for a Canadian audience in the 1890's and after. According to Berton, the members of the Sandford Fleming expedition had with them a copy of The Great Lone Land as they travelled across the prairies to Edmonton; and accompanying them for this portion of their transcontinental journey was the Methodist missionary George McDougall, who had also been Butler's host at Victoria mission only eighteen months before. Having realized, however, that G. M. Grant represented only one of several historical connections between Butler and the McDougall family, particularly as these connections centred in the person of George McDougall, I became increasingly aware of how necessary it was to re-examine the role of this early prairie missionary in western Canada's development. Hence the digression, more apparent than real, in the central chapters of this dissertation, as I turn for a brief space from literary events to social and political ones.

Chapters VI and VII focus on George McDougall, first as a figure in western Canada's social, political and religious history -- "Pioneer, Patriot and Missionary," as his son John was to describe him -- and then as an actor in a personal drama which I began to discern as having almost certainly taken place sometime after the publication of Butler's book -- either (as I conjecture) in the summer of 1872, or at some point during the four years following. I use the word "drama" advisedly. I am concerned in these chapters with the thoughts and feelings of historic individuals, in a given historical context; and yet reconstruction of those thoughts and feelings must rest as much on inference as on documentary proof. This is why I am bound to write in terms of a hypothesis, rather than of facts which are at all points ascertainable; for there are gaps in the documentary record which only educated guesswork can supply. It becomes, in some instances, a question of filling in names purposely left blank, of juxtaposing divergent explanations for the same phenomena, and of placing considerable emphasis on the precise meaning of men's words. It is, perhaps, only a student of literature who would undertake to engage in this kind of detailed explication of texts; nonetheless, I have found the exercise both historically illuminating, and methodologically fascinating. I believe that it is in these chapters, despite their unlikely subject, that social, literary and cultural history come closest to complete identification.

In Chapter VIII I pause once more over problems of historiography, this time in relation to George McDougall's eldest son John. I have come to believe that the writings of John McDougall are as important for the definition of Anglo-Canadian aspirations and values during the formative period of western settlement as those of any man living at the time. This is a very large claim; it is larger, probably, than any McDougall would have made for himself -- and John McDougall, as more than one acquaintance made a point of remarking, was not exactly reticent about his achievements in life. Nonetheless, the grounds for its support lie readily accessible, in the voluminous writings of this most communicative of prairie missionaries. The problem is to convince prairie historians that these materials are reliable sources for the writing of history -- a possibility that, so far at least, these historians have been unwilling to concede. I do not expect that the brief defense which I have mustered of McDougall's essential trustworthiness will overturn an entire historiographical tradition at one stroke; still, Chapter VIII does at least pinpoint several subjects for further debate, and as such may serve as the thin edge of the wedge against the closed door which Canadian historians have thus far shown to McDougall's writings.

Chapter IX offers, in what amounts to outline form, several of the grounds on which McDougall's qualifications to act as guide to our understanding of western social formation can be seen to rest most securely; while in Chapters X and XI, aspects of social and political history may once more be observed in the act of edging towards the precincts of literary history, as I try to show how aesthetic standards and language training contributed to the individual exercise of a specific literary form: again, the narrative of travel and adventure in the west, with John McDougall's achievements as a writer forming the main theme of the discussion. In these chapters, as in the earlier chapters on Butler, certain components of a finished literary structure are subjected to analysis -- in particular, narrative mode, the concept of the hero, and the development of a characteristic prose style.

Finally, in Chapter XII, the combined historical and literary investigations of the preceding chapters are given an opportunity, albeit a very minimal one, to demonstrate their usefulness as a means of literary assessment, as I look briefly at two works of fiction. One is W. F. Butler's Red Cloud, The Solitary Sioux, published in 1882; the other is John McDougall's Wa-pee Moos-tooch, published in 1908. Both these books were offered to their respective reading publics as tales of adventure in the old pre-settlement west, when the Indians and the buffalo still roamed the land.

The concluding chapter will bear the title of the dissertation as a whole: "Images of the Canadian West." The word "image" is not one to be used casually, as I have discovered in the course of working on this study. Like the word "culture," it is chameleon-like in its perfect adaptation to widely varying backgrounds, appearing to be equally at home in the writings of anthropologists, sociologists, economists, literary critics, and historians of every conceivable stripe and hue. It is this very flexibility of meaning which makes image-study both an attractive and a hazardous occupation. Some of the hazards, I try to suggest in this final chapter; others will no doubt make themselves perfectly apparent to the critical reader of this dissertation. The attractions remain, however, particularly for the student of Canadian literary and cultural history; for few fields of study can offer such a stimulating range of possibilities for exploring the ways in which deeds and words conjoin to form the national traditions of a people.

II

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

"From the clash of the early pioneers with the _métis_," writes Manitoba social historian J. E. Rae, "the most persistent social theme of the Prairies has been the struggle for cultural dominance." Rae continues, in his article of 1970, "The Roots of Prairie Society":

> Our immediate starting point must be the recognition of the fact that the contemporary culture of the Canadian Prairies dates roughly from the decade of the 1880's. . . . The Indians, along with the _métis_, have survived as a sub-culture and have made little impact on Prairie society. But that is another, sadder story. When Manitoba entered Confederation in 1870, its population was only about 12,000, evenly divided between French-speaking Catholics and English Protestants. It had come to its own social consensus through the distracted events of the birth of the province, and its confirmation in the _Manitoba Act_. But the original balance of the province was permanently altered by the wave of immigration from Ontario in the 1870's and 1880's. Manitoba, to put it another way, was reborn in the image of Ontario.

Conceding that "one may not be justified in projecting in detail to the rest of the Prairie West this fundamental change in Manitoba society," Rae nonetheless thinks it reasonable to assume that "at least in general terms, Prairie culture developed from a Manitoba base. . . . The Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta . . . acquired their distinctive qualities, but perhaps as variations on a central regional theme begun in Manitoba."[1]

Writing on "the struggle for cultural dominance" in Manitoba, Rae takes for granted (as well he might) his readers' familiarity with the historical writing of W. L. Morton; for although Morton's Manitoba: A History earns only a single footnote from Rae, this book is recognizably central to Rae's argument in his Prairie Perspectives article. It is on the basis of Morton's thorough, sensitive handling of a great mass of documentary material that Rae has been enabled to claim with such confidence that in the 1870's and 1880's, "Manitoba was reborn in the image of Ontario"; and it is Morton, too, who illuminates so well the complex issues involved in "the clash of the early pioneers with the métis."[2]

Readers of Manitoba: A History may recall that a full six chapters of that book -- from "The Old Order and the Transfer," through "The New Pattern of Settlement" and "The Triumph of Ontario Democracy," to the resolution contained in "A British and Canadian Province" -- chronicle the struggle for cultural dominance in Manitoba during the 1850's, '60's, '70's and '80's, as pioneer families from Ontario confronted the established society of Red River and its environs. Among the first wave of arrivals from the east, Morton recounts, was Kenneth McKenzie, a "master farmer" from Guelph, Ontario, who in 1869 "went beyond the farthest claim at 'The Portage' and ploughed a challenging furrow around fourteen hundred acres of grass and timber land on Rat Creek."[3] The furrow was a "challenging" one because the Indians of Rat Creek had not yet signed treaties giving up title to the land McKenzie now claimed as his own; and the question of land, as Morton emphasizes, was of critical importance:

> The claims of Indians, *métis*, and the Company to the lands of the North-west were all challenged, directly or implicitly, by Canadians in the fall of 1868 and the spring of 1869. . . . McKenzie's claim on Rat Creek necessitated the negotiation of a treaty by James McKay with Yellow Quill's band. . . . The natives . . . could see a land rush developing in which they would be swept aside by these aggressive newcomers who appropriated the land, took the camp sites, ploughed up the trails, drove off the game.

Yet the contest over the ownership of land was not the full measure of the challenges brought by "these aggressive newcomers." Writes Morton, "It was rumoured that the newcomers had boasted that 'the half-breeds would soon be driven from the country, or kept as cart-drivers to bring in the vehicles of the new immigrants,' and the feeling grew that the coming of strangers, as Charles Mair, paymaster of the Dawson Road party, had told the Indians at Rat Creek, 'was like the march of the sun, it could not be stopped.' It was not a reassuring message."[4]

These anecdotes of challenge and response relate, of course, to the other, sadder story for which J. E. Rae had little space to spare in his brief article on the roots of prairie society. In Morton's longer work, however, the displacement of the country's resident population serves as a sombre counter-theme to the triumph of Ontario democracy; and because Morton has drawn on a wide range of primary sources, and shows, moreover, admirable judgment in using them, he is the better able to integrate into his account just such vignettes of speech, action and feeling as those involving Kenneth McKenzie, Charles Mair, and the Indians of Yellow Quill's band. Thus the "general terms" in which Rae felt himself obliged to argue in the

Prairie Perspectives article can be fleshed out, as it were, by reference to Morton's more detailed account of individual responses to the challenges brought by immigration during the years surrounding the Transfer.

In chapter 5 of his history, dealing with the years 1857 to 1869, Morton turns his attention to the breakdown of the "isolation from the agricultural frontier of North America" which alone had preserved Canada's western interior for the fur trade past the mid-point of the nineteenth century.[5] In the absence of outside influences, so Morton contends, a delicate political, economic and social balance had arisen among the region's disparate components.[6] At the same time, it was an isolation against which many of the Red River settlement's younger residents were moved to protest, as they chafed against the narrow limits imposed on their ambitions by their separation from the great world.

It had for some time been the custom of the settlement's more progressive families to offset the disadvantages of isolation by sending their children 'outside' for at least some of their education. But as Morton points out, education was not in itself a solution as long as Red River continued to be a Company settlement. Morton formulates the most pressing cultural problem of such families in these terms: "A new order was needed, but how would the half-breed sons of Red River share in a new order which would fuse Red River with the larger world?"[7] And in illustration of this predicament, he quotes from a correspondence between James and William Ross, dating from 1856 and preserved in the Ross family papers.

The Rosses had been a prominent family in the affairs of Red River throughout most of the settlement's history. Alexander Ross, the father of William and James, in addition to being a successful trader, was a leader in the colony's social and intellectual life as well. He was the settlement's first historian. In 1856 he published, under a London imprint, a volume still respected by western Canadian historians entitled Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress and Present State, with Some Account of the Native Races, and Its General History to the Present Day. His wife, known throughout the settlement as Granny Ross, was not without distinction in her own right, as the daughter of an Okanagan chief. During the early 1850's the two sons of this couple, William and James, were educated at the Red River Academy. Then James proceeded to the University of Toronto to study law, while William stayed behind in the settlement. The brothers corresponded during the years of their separation, on subjects of interest to them both.

In a letter dated February 9, 1856, William wrote to James:

> You know the fact that Red River is half a century behind the age -- no stirring events to give life and vigour to our debilitated political life. The incubus of the Company's monopoly -- the peculiar government under which we vegetate or are fostered; all hang like a nightmare on our political and social existence -- it cools our ardour -- destroys our energies, and finally annihilates our very desires for improvement. Such being the state of our political atmosphere you will not be surprised that our lives should be a dull monotonous sameness -- careless of every tie that binds this country to the mother [sic] or sister colonies -- and why is this? Just for the reasons above given and because we in R[ed] R[iver] live for ourselves and care for no one else -- nothing but the little tattle of scandal in every one's mouth -- of this we have plenty. Such a state of things

> cannot last forever, sooner or later the whole fabric must be swept away, and then and not till then will Red River move onward, slowly it may be, but surely -- it is marvellous with what apathy people look at everything here, and yet we need not be surprised when we know that public opinion is moulded by the circumstances of the times. We ought to have a flood of immigration to infuse new life, new ideas, and destroy all our old associations with the past, i.e. in so far as it hinders our progress for the future -- a regular transformation will sharpen our intellects, fill our minds with new projects and give life and vigour to all our thoughts, words, and actions.[8]

From the phrasing of William's letter, one might judge that considerable common ground existed between this impatient young man of Red River, and the no-less-impatient young men of Ontario's marginal farmlands -- those who would hearken to the promise of new frontiers to settle when, in the course of the following year, the Canadian Exploring Expedition of 1857 was despatched to the western interior. In calling for the sweeping away of the whole fabric, "a regular transformation [to] sharpen our intellects, fill our minds with new projects and give life and vigour to all our thoughts, words and actions," William Ross appears to proclaim himself at one with the expansionists of Upper Canada. This was language that George Brown of the Globe would understand perfectly, and endorse wholeheartedly.

James Ross, however, attending lectures in Toronto in 1856, seems to have discovered something about the personal costs attached to his family's progressive ambitions which his brother William in Red River had perhaps been spared to that point. In his history of Manitoba, W. L. Morton quotes only one sentence from James' letter to William in December 1856. It is a very revealing sentence, however; for in it, James Ross voiced a central problem for the majority of those who constituted the de facto aristocracy of Red River: the problem of defining and defending the basis of their self-respect, as individuals and as members of an established community. "What if Mama were an Indian?" James wrote, in evident perplexity, resentment and pain.[9]

James' question, as Morton correctly notes, sprang from feelings of defensive pride: pride in a worthy parent subjected to derision by critics ignorant of the social structure of James' native community, and of his family's respected position therein. What exactly had provoked James' question, Morton does not inform his readers; nonetheless, the general nature of its provocation can be guessed at readily enough: a taunt at his mixed-blood descent. From the question alone, we can infer that in Toronto, James Ross had met on their own grounds the kinds of progressive Canadians whose more enterprising members would shortly be initiating the flood of immigration, the regular transformation, so ardently desired by his brother at home in Red River.

If the self-respect to which reference has been made, the emergent sense of particularity and worth among the region's residents, at first found expression in defensive pride, we ought not be surprised. James Ross's resentment on behalf of his parentage -- "What if Mama were an Indian?" -- incorporates both the defiance and the uncertainty of one who feels compelled to speak out in support of values and customs for which there exists, as yet, no clearly established acknowledgement, no articulated recognition and deference, beyond the borders of the small and distant community of his birth.

Yet if the search for answers to his question were ever to arrive at any reasonably satisfactory conclusion, it must at some point be made to extend beyond the confines of private conversations and private correspondences; it must become a public issue for the community at large. There were others besides James Ross in Red River Settlement to whom his question represented an urgent personal concern, even in the 1850's, and the urgency would mount in the decades to follow. For although the particular challenge to which James Ross was responding in his letter to William remains buried in the Ross family papers, accessible only to the historical researcher, there would be many other challenges of a closely related nature broadcast for all the world to read as western settlement proceeded: critiques of the Northwest people and their habits of life promulgated by visitors to the region who knew that, in their experiences in the west, they had possession of a readily-marketable commodity.

By the time the settlement period was drawing to a close, the penchant displayed by visitors from abroad for rushing into print was a commonplace of Canadian journalism. From the columns of The Edmonton Saturday News in 1908 come these remarks, by Gertrude Balmer Watt:

> I suppose that a new country, like a new baby, must patiently submit to a great deal of discussion as to its various characteristics, what the influence of its parentage upon it is, and how far it shows evidence of striking out on an original course. It is the price that it has to pay for the fact that it is new. . . . It finds itself criticized and advised by those who know the youthful personage they seek to guide so slightly that their interference can only serve to irritate. . . .

> Hardly a week goes by but we hear of some distinguished Britisher coming out to the Dominion for the purpose of sizing up conditions here. What they have to say we read with interest, but in very few cases do we find that their observations are of much value to any one concerned.
>
> It would be a matter of great surprise if they were. How can a man who rushes from ocean to ocean and back again in five or six weeks form a proper judgment of the people he has come out to study?[10]

One of those distinguished Britishers, Mrs. George Cran, quoted this passage in A Woman in Canada, her account of travelling through the Dominion in the summer of 1909. Like dozens of other British travellers, publishing contracts tucked away in their suitcases, who came to Canada during these years, Mrs. Cran had indeed come to size up conditions here, on behalf of intending emigrants in England. The single "condition" which impressed her most forcibly, however, was the degree of animosity -- her phrase is "proud resentment" -- which marked her conversations with Canadians. "I have referred constantly to the quarrels in which I was involved on that pet grievance of the Canadian," she wrote, "-- the inferiority of the English settler to every other, the superiority of Canada to England; the coldness of England to her great colony. From first to last that was rammed into my tingling ears."[11]

"Oh, sir, we quarrel in print, by the book": Touchstone, in As You Like It, Shakespeare's Canadian comedy. The published record which documents the period of western settlement in Canada, from the late 1860's to the outbreak of war in 1914, shows that the struggle for cultural dominance taking place on the frontiers of settlement west of Fort Garry was but part of a larger struggle concurrently taking place in Canada as a whole. In an extended and voluminous quarrel in print, Canadians and Britishers, over the space of half a century, published literally hundreds of books devoted to airing "that pet grievance of the Canadian" -- the relative merits of England and Canada as objects of national loyalty. They quarreled about many things during those critical decades of national expansion in Canada; but chiefly, they quarreled about standards: standards of beauty, as in landscape, for example; of gentility and cultivation in deportment and manners; and of judging the probability of long-term accomplishment in the broader social structures which conjoin to form the institutional framework of a national civilization.

"Civilization" was the key issue. As far as the majority of Britishers were concerned, Samuel Johnson's dictum on emigration to the colonies still held: "A man of any intellectual enjoyment will not easily go and immerse himself and his posterity for ages in barbarism."[12] Understandably, few observers of Canadian civilization, whether British or Canadian in viewpoint, were prepared to commit themselves to final judgments on Canadian life and manners. Rather, the debate was carried on in the form of questions, of tentative assertions, and, in some significant cases, of determined attempts to re-define current and accepted terms of social and cultural designation. Deserving particular attention, then, are the publications of those individual residents of this country who, whether from defensive pride, or from more historically respectable motives, refused to acknowledge the right of distinguished Britishers to set the standards of social and cultural achievement in the newly-settled prairie west.

One might wish for a more civilized word than "quarrel" to describe the exchange of statements and counter-statements which went to make up the debate over Canada in English-language publications of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet where personal sensitivities are so closely involved, perhaps it is the most accurate word, after all. What is more important than the name, however, is the process itself -- the process of emerging self-consciousness and self-definition among members of a community, a region, or a nation; and in this process, a lively sensitivity to disparagement and insult can sometimes provide the necessary point of departure. "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?" jibed Sidney Smith in the Edinburgh Review in 1820; and the results for American civilization have been chronicled by successive generations of literary and cultural historians in that country ever since.

Henry Bamford Parkes, on the other hand, chose to interpret the process in a more general light. Summarizing the argument of The Divine Order, his study of western civilization from classical times to the renaissance, Parkes saw two distinct stages in the evolution of a culture. Working on a very broad canvas, Parkes explains that "both the classical and the Western civilizations were able to develop such clearly marked qualities because they were largely isolated from other people during their formative periods." Then, with the break-down of isolation after this initial period of independent development, self-consciousness as a cultural unit followed. As Parkes describes it, "Close contact, especially during the Crusades, stimulated the new Western society to an awareness of cultural antagonism which hastened the process of self-definition. Without such a process no civilization can achieve greatness."[13]

"By civilization," Parkes went on to write,

> I mean simply a group of people who have similar institutions, moral and political values, and general views of life, and who, often in spite of frequent and intense conflicts, are able to exert a continuing influence on each other. In analysing cultural history it is necessary to regard the whole civilization as the basic unit of study, as one cannot otherwise find continuous lines of development. The cultural growth of the different peoples who belong to the same civilization is constantly affected by trends that are common to all of them and cannot be explained without continuing reference to the whole civilization. It is impossible to understand the development of any one country if it is studied in isolation from its neighbours.[14]

With this latter remark, W. L. Morton would be in full agreement. In his history of Manitoba, Morton more than once insists that the provincial society which took shape in the prairie west after 1870, while undeniably self-centred in its own concerns, was nonetheless subject to frequent reminders that it stood as "a province of an industrial and commercial empire that was ocean wide and in some ways world wide."[15] During the 1860's and '70's, residents of Red River grappled with the effects of radical social and economic change; while at the same time, Britishers at the heart of empire faced changes no less disturbing to the individuals involved. Being at once political, economic, religious and social, the transformation of Victorian Britain which took place during the middle years of

Victoria's reign reached its own form of crisis in the decade surrounding the Transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada.

How this crisis took shape, British historian G. Kitson Clark describes in detail in The Making of Victorian England, first published in 1962. In a chapter entitled "The New Politics and the New Gentry," Clark undertakes to examine the changing standards of social distinction in Britain in the 1860's and '70's, turning, characteristically, to a novel by Dickens in illustration of his argument. Writes Clark:

> As wealth became more diffused there were many people who began to assume the trappings of gentility, but for many of the more wealthy the trappings would not be enough; they would want the name, and if they were careful they could gain the name simply by assuming it. They would suddenly emerge like Mr. Veneering in Our Mutual Friend with a mansion, a coat of arms, Parliamentary ambitions and, as a guest at his dinners, a scion of the real aristocracy who would discover to his bewilderment that he was one of Mr. Veneering's oldest friends.

The name which such parvenues assumed, Clark goes on to make clear, was the name of Gentleman:

> The existence of such aspirations, and the uncertainty of social definition, led however to an agonizing problem which possibly in the nineteenth century caused more trouble and heartburning in well-nourished bosoms than any other secular problem: Who were gentlefolk and who were not? In more antique times this problem may have been a relatively simple one, a gentleman was a man who sprang from an appropriate family, or who had had a grant of arms, or owned an appropriate estate. But in the eighteenth, and still more in the nineteenth century, these relatively simple tests seem to have become ever more difficult to apply. Society was becoming increasingly complex and changing rapidly. Men and women became less certain of the sufficiency of the simple ideas of a hierarchy of birth and began to supplement and confuse the conception of a gentleman with the attribution of mental and moral qualities. A gentleman would naturally have received the education of a gentleman, his manners and his conduct ought to shew a refinement which was one of the attributes of gentility.[16]

And in order to explore the more subtle configurations of this complex issue, Clark turns to another novelist, Jane Austen, engaging in a discussion of Pride and Prejudice as a document of social history and concluding:

> However, few people were likely to judge the matter with the penetration of Jane Austen, nor to share the austerity and firmness of her principles. There existed generally a vague idea that the conception of a gentleman ought to include moral attributes, it was indeed an idea which hovered through much nineteenth-century thought and was not without its influence on social values, but as a conception it was unlikely to be precise enough or powerful enough to be the ruling principle in determining social position. People were not going to test a man's gentility solely by the touchstone of his morals or his behaviour, the results of an attempt to do this would be too revolutionary and inconvenient; but some tests were needed which would extend the number of gentlemen, and which would rationalize and moralize the conception of a gentleman for a generation which the old naive touchstones of blood, or heraldry, or landownership would by no means suffice.[17]

Clark then outlines for his readers the more obvious of the tests which did in fact emerge, and which resulted in "the consolidation of a caste": the caste of the new gentry, to which an increasing range of professional men could claim to belong -- "barristers, civil servants, literary men and others -- whose status was assured and to whom the title of gentleman would hardly be denied, except by rather old or very stupid people."[18] These classes, of course, were in addition to the three traditional avenues of entré into the social élite: the church, the law and the military; to which a fourth, politics, might on occasion have been added. As Clark points out, however, even the established genteel professions were being overhauled to meet the demand for an increased number of gentlemen, and for more flexible tests for individual aspirants to achieve this status. Thus in 1871, for example, after years of debate, the system of promotion by purchase in the Army was abolished, thereby removing one of the standing obstacles to the upward rise of ambitious young officers in times of peace.

As these few excerpts from The Making of Victorian England are meant to suggest, G. Kitson Clark is one historian who is fully prepared to go beyond Hansard and the more narrowly conceived historical record in his analysis of social and cultural development. Consider, for example, one of the sentences quoted above on page 28: "The existence of such aspirations, and the uncertainty of social definition, led however to an agonizing problem which possibly in the nineteenth century caused more trouble and heartburning in well-nourished bosoms than any other secular problem: Who were gentlefolk and who were not?" This is, we recognize, a particular kind of historical generalization, being one for which there can be no final and absolute confirmation. Rather, it is a speculation, identified as such by the word "possibly," which reflects an able and conscientious historian's wide reading in the publications of the period. Yet if we are at all familiar with the range of materials on which Clark has drawn, we are unlikely to offer serious resistance to his statement -- there is simply too much published evidence on his side. When in support of this generalization Clark himself cites one particular document, the report of the Public School Commissioners from the Parliamentary Papers of 1864, he explains that he has chosen it because it so well summarizes an extended and pervasive debate among the higher levels of Victorian society, the debate over who were gentlefolk and who were not. In addition, however, Clark has the inestimable advantage of knowing that others besides the Public School Commissioners were documenting the currents of change in British society. With confidence and ease Clark calls in turn on Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, W. M. Thackeray and Anthony Trollope for confirmation of the historical record. He offers, for example, Bob Cratchit as the type of the poor but respectable clerk; and in answer to "this simple but very difficult question -- 'Who precisely were the middle classes?'," includes "all that [provincial] society George Eliot knew so well" -- and which, by implication, readers of George Eliot's novels also know so well that Clark is relieved of the necessity to particularize further.[19]

I wish, moreover, to make special note of one further matter of interest from these chapters in Clark's history, one which he introduces as a point of detail: that among the aspirants to the new gentry were members of a rising "profession," the profession of letters. ". . . Barristers, civil servants, literary men and others . . . to whom the title of gentleman would hardly be denied," Clark writes. To engage in the exercise of letters, in a suitably well-bred mode, was to by-pass the dubious route to gentility employed by the Veneerings of this world. Parliamentary reporting, of course, was rather beyond the pale, and even fiction for family reading might not bespeak the gentleman. But a regimental history, say, or a book of travel and adventure in far-away climes -- the possibilities were decidedly there.

G. Kitson Clark's analysis of the changing social structure of Victorian England is of importance to my purposes here, then, both for the information which he offers about that society, and for the example which he provides of how belles-lettres may be used to substantiate or qualify the historical record, especially where the "simple but difficult" questions of social definition are concerned. Would we of the twentieth century, Clark asks, know as much as we do about agony and heartburning among the new gentry of the mid-nineteenth century, had not Dickens suffered life-long mortification at having been sent by his heretofore-genteel family into the blacking-factory? Recognizing this as the kind of evidence that statistics about income levels and religious affiliation cannot ever fully replace, Clark demonstrates in principle and in detail the mutuality of life and literature.

I have named five novelists on whom this English historian drew for his analysis of his country's past. There was one further novelist, however, to whom he might profitably have turned as well for illustration of his arguments. Consider these words, from George Meredith's novel of 1879, The Egoist: "There is this dream in the English country; and it must be an aspiration after some form of melodious gentlemanliness which is imagined to have inhabited the island at one time; as among our poets the dream of the period of a circle of chivalry here is encouraged for the pleasure of the imagination."[20] The egoist of the title is Sir Willoughby Patterne, whose female relatives have deliberately set out to produce a perfect type of the young English gentleman. And in order to demonstrate Sir Willoughby's perfection as a type, Meredith, in the early pages of the novel, sends his central character to America, ostensibly to broaden his education by travel, but in reality to permit Sir Willoughby to exercise his impregnable prejudices and his expensive education alike in providing for his relatives in England a "sketch" of "our democratic cousins." "He carried his English standard over that Continent," writes Sir Willoughby's creator, "and by simply jotting down facts, he left an idea of the results of the measurement to his family and friends at home."[21]

By the late 1870's, of course, the figure of the British gentleman or gentlewoman traveller in America was too familiar, on both sides of the Atlantic, to escape the satirist's pen. Dickens and Mrs. Trollope were only two of thousands who made the tourist pilgrimage across the Atlantic, and only the two best known of the hundreds who published their notes and journals on their return. Meredith sets about to accomplish his satire of the type through wholly characteristic means, offering an example of a mannerism in Sir Willoughby which, for Meredith, was as reliably revealing of character as any human activity -- an example, that is, of Sir Willoughby's prose style:

> Really incomparable letters! . . . He was an adept in the irony of incongruously grouping. The nature of the Equality under the stars and stripes was presented in this manner.

> Equality! Reflections came occasionally. "These cousins of ours are highly amusing. I am among the descendants of the Roundheads. Now and then an allusion to old domestic differences, in perfect good temper. We go on in our way; they theirs, in the apparent belief that Republicanism operates remarkable changes in human nature. Vernon tries hard to think it does. The upper ten of our cousins are the Infernal of Paris. The rest of them is Radical England, as far as I am acquainted with that section of my country." -- Where we compared, they were absurd; where we contrasted, they were monstrous. The contrast of Vernon's letters with Willoughby's was just as extreme. You could hardly have taken them for relatives travelling together, or Vernon Whitford for a born and bred Englishman. The same scenes furnished by these two pens might have been sketched in different hemispheres. Vernon had no irony. He had nothing of Willoughby's epistolary creative power, which, causing his family and friends to exclaim, "How like him that is!" conjured them across the broad Atlantic to behold and clap hands at his lordliness.
>
> They saw him distinctly, as with the naked eye: a word, a turn of the pen, or a word unsaid, offered the picture of him in America, Japan, China, Australia, nay, the Continent of Europe, holding an English review of his Maker's grotesques. Vernon seemed a sheepish fellow, without stature abroad, glad of a compliment, grateful for a dinner, endeavouring sadly to digest all he saw and heard. But one was a Patterne; the other a Whitford. One had genius; the other pottered after him with the title of student. One was the English gentleman wherever he went; the other was a new kind of thing, nondescript, produced in England of late, and not likely to come to much good himself, or do much good to the country.[22]

A classic demonstration of the Comic Spirit at play. Meredith knows, with all the assurance of a highly accomplished stylist, that in dealing with individuals whose very existence is dependent on the maintenance of a "posture" (Meredith's own word), a finely-imagined rôle, the analysis of prose style is as conclusive an avenue to the understanding of character as any other means. There is a literal sense, in describing such persons, in which the style is the man. But if the Comic Spirit once penetrates the facade, the posture is in grave danger of collapse; when Clara Middleton finally comprehends that her fiancé is all words and no substance, Sir Willoughby's exquisite leg totters beneath him, and he is saved from utter annihilation only by the self-sacrifice -- call it generosity or call it cowardice -- of Laetitia Dale. Emerging, furthermore, as the man of choice in the comic plot of Meredith's novel is the impressionable and honest Vernon Whitford -- the student, the nondescript. Outshone throughout the bulk of the novel by the lustre of Sir Willoughby's presence, Vernon Whitford's are nonetheless the virtues and values which provide the standard against which the satire achieves its effectiveness.

George Meredith and Sir Willoughby Patterne may seem far removed indeed from the provincial society of Manitoba in the 1860's and '70's with which this chapter began. Meredith's satire may easily be recognized as the product of a full-blown literary culture on the brink of decadence: "Arcadian by the aesthetic route" is Meredith's description of the society he dissects. In Manitoba, on the other hand, these same decades were being taken up by the tasks of pioneering, and there was little time or energy to spare for notions of art and culture. "The achievement of this formative period was, of course, largely material," W. L. Morton writes in Manitoba: A History:

> The school system was extended, the University of Manitoba continued its sober growth; the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba was in its most active and fruitful phase. But there was no equal to Ross's or Hargrave's historical writing; not even George Bryce's first work, Manitoba, Its Infancy and Growth, possesses the literary charm or factual content of their work. . . . The literature of travel, so striking in the thirty years before 1870, had practically ended. Its place was taken by the journal of the

> tourist and the narrative of the settler. . . . No imaginative work in verse or prose was produced.[23]

What was produced, however, during this formative period in Manitoba, was far from negligible; for it was during these early decades of settlement that the patterns of public and private life alike were being drawn in for the guidance of future generations of westerners. Both W. L. Morton and J. E. Rae are quite right to insist on the critical importance of the period before the completion of the C.P.R. to the eventual social structure of the prairie provinces.

Although it is Rae's contention, in his article on the roots of prairie society, that "the contemporary culture of the Canadian Prairies dates roughly from the decade of the 1880's," I think it is possible to be a little more precise than that. It dates, in fact, from the summer of 1872, when several thousand immigrants entered the new province to begin the decade of moderate but steady settlement which culminated in the Manitoba fever of 1880-1882. Many documents survive bearing witness to the heady atmosphere created in Red River by this influx of newcomers, some written on the spot (Begg's Ten Years in Winnipeg, for example), and some recorded after varying intervals of time in the form of memoirs.

Into this latter category fall the memoirs of John McDougall, who had occasion to remember that summer of 1872. Into four short months, from July through October, were crowded some of the most important events of his life: his ordination in the Methodist ministry in July, his summer on leave in his native province of Ontario, after twelve years at isolated Indian missions in the

Edmonton region, and then his whirlwind courtship of Eliza Boyd, whom he married and brought back with him to the west that fall, as he returned to take up his duties with the church.

Even in early October, as John McDougall and his bride approached Red River via Minnesota, they found themselves competing for space on the steamer which ran between Grand Forks and the Manitoba settlements. The *International*, McDougall wrote in his memoirs, was "laden with many tons of freight and crowded from the main to the hurricane deck with men and women seeking their fortune in this great free country." For McDougall, who had followed the same route on his first journey to Red River twelve years before, in 1860, the changes which had taken place in the interval seemed to call for particular notice:

> The last time I went down this muddy stream we were on a small barge, and our motive power big sweeps in the hands of stalwart men whose loins were girt about with Hudson's Bay sashes, and whose meat was pemmican. Four at a time, in six-hour turns, these men kept at it day and night without stop, and for eight days and nights we wound down from Georgetown, a city of two houses, even to Fort Garry and the Red River Settlement, of whose people and their habit of life a facetious Yankee said some years later, "Why, sir, everything is done out here by man's strength and stupidness," for as yet no modern machinery had come in, neither had it entered into the heads or hearts of any of these passive aboriginal peoples to dream of such. But now we are vibrant with the throb of our engines; every plank and bolt in our vessel is nervous with motion, and undoubtedly as we swing the bends of the river we are conscious of the beginning of a wonderful change.[24]

"The beginning of a wonderful change": the change, in John McDougall's phrasing, from passivity to vibrant motion; or, to use the words of the facetious Yankee, from strength and stupidness to mechanization and modernity. Red River, which William Ross had censured in his letter to James as being fifty years behind the times, was finally being touched, in the summer and fall of 1872, by the forces of nineteenth-century progress.

But John McDougall, no less than James Ross, knew something at first hand of the impact that progress must have on the people of the west and their habit of life. He knew that the wonderful change came at a price: the price of direct challenge to the personal self-respect of many of the region's old-time residents. The flood of immigration which William Ross had hoped would, with its "new life, new ideas . . . destroy all our old associations with the past, i.e. in so far as it hinders our progress for the future," turned out in actual event to bring with it some very old ideas about racial, social and cultural superiority. What these challenges were, and how John McDougall responded to them, will form the plot, so to speak, of my narrative of cultural self-definition in Canada's prairie west; and the first scene opens with William Francis Butler, who, like Touchstone, was inclined to see much virtue in "if."

III

A CLASSIC OF TRAVEL LITERATURE

> And if it be matter for desire that across this immense continent, resting upon the two greatest oceans of the world, a powerful nation should arise with the strength and the manhood which race and climate and tradition would assign to it -- a nation which would look with no evil eye upon the old mother land from whence it sprung, a nation, which, having no bitter memories to recall, would have no idle prejudices to perpetuate -- then surely it is worthy of all toil of hand and brain, on the part of those who to-day rule, that this great link in the chain of such a future nationality should no longer remain undeveloped, a prey to the conflicts of savage races, at once the garden and the wilderness of the Central Continent.[1]

"This great link in the chain of such a future nationality . . ., at once the garden and the wilderness of the Central Continent": these words, referring to the immense geographical region known at the time as the Northwest Territories of Canada, appear in a government document of 1871.[2] The writer was Lieutenant William Francis Butler of Her Majesty's 69th Regiment, reporting to Lieutenant-Governor Adams G. Archibald of Manitoba on the findings of his official tour of reconnaissance through the interior during the winter following the Transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada.

"And if it be matter for desire . . ." -- Butler knew, as well as anyone in the country, that there were no "ifs" about the issue in the minds of those to whom he was directing his remarks. The end was clear enough: the introduction of a numerous and loyal agricultural population into the plains and parklands of the west under the direction of the Canadian authorities. The problems lay in the choice and application of means. Aspirations must be translated into policies, and then into acts of legislation; suitable institutions and agencies must be created or adapted; and, most difficult of all, individual human energies must be channelled into the myriad private and public initiatives which collectively might "convert the wild luxuriance of . . . now useless vegetation into all the requirements of civilized life."[3] Behind Butler's resounding phrases stood a complex and critical phase in Canada's national existence.

Butler's instructions before setting out on his fact-finding tour on behalf of the Canadian government had specifically directed him to "examine the matter entirely from an independent point of view": independent, that is, of the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company who must perforce be his chief sources of information along his route of travel, but "whose views may be supposed to be in some measure affected by their pecuniary interests" (GLL, 385). By means of this directive, Archibald signified the government's desire that any advice Butler might offer bearing on the region's preparation for settlement be free of the bias of involvement in the internal politics of the Northwest, rudimentary though those politics were in the 1870's. Obligingly, Butler's recommendations concurred fully with the federal government's already-formed determination to submerge the existing social and political organization of the Northwest in the more complex order of the older colonies. "The first pressing necessity," wrote Butler in his report,

> is the establishment, as speedily as possible, of some civil authority which will give a distinct and tangible idea of Government to the native and half-breed population, now so totally devoid of the knowledge of what law and civil government may pertain to. The establishment of such an authority, distinct from, and independent of, the Hudson Bay Company, as well as from any missionary body situated in the country, would inaugurate a new series of events, a commencement, as it were, of civilization in these vast regions, free from all associations connected with the former history of the country (GLL, 382).

These observations form the heart of Butler's report to the Canadian authorities. From them, it would appear that William Francis Butler, no less than William Ross, looked to a sweeping away of the whole fabric, a regular transformation.

At the same time, Butler went to some trouble to make clear to the government that his reasons for formulating this advice were entirely objective; his role, he claimed, was that of one who foresees the inevitable, and acts on the opportunity to perform as a handmaiden to history. "If I were asked from what point of view I have looked on this question," he wrote, "I would answer -- From that point which sees a vast country . . . silently awaiting the approach of the immense wave of human life which rolls unceasingly from Europe to America, and which is destined to reach these beautiful solitudes," (GLL, 386). Then comes the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the "if" in the phrase, "And if it be matter for desire" clearly denoting a gesture of tact. In it resides the deference of one who observes and acknowledges certain fundamental facts of current political organization, but who nevertheless maintains a position of distance and disinterestedness in relation to them.

Had Butler's writing about the Northwest of Canada ended with his report to Archibald in March 1871, his connection with the "commencement, as it were, of civilization in these vast regions" would, for the historian, be confined chiefly to his independent confirmation of the usefulness of a mounted police force in counteracting insecurity and unrest on the western plains. But of course it did not end there. Lieutenant Butler's point of view towards western settlement was, as it happens, rather less disinterested than the courteous and tentative "if" of his report implied. True, he was free of any past connection with the region's political structure. What is more, his employment with the British Army, from which he was on leave while touring the interior, still held out to him a reasonably comfortable niche to which he might return on completion of his civil assignment. Butler's personal history, however -- what indeed might justly be termed his social history, seen in the light of the mid-Victorian dilemma which G. Kitson Clark has analysed so shrewdly -- subjected him to pressures which considerably complicated his relation to the question of the west. For at the time of writing his report to Government, Butler's enthusiasm for the project of prairie settlement was stimulated by the prospect of directing, in his own person, the region's transformation from an useless wilderness to a cradle of civilization. His hopes turned out, however, to have been without foundation. When this happened, Butler could not contain his disappointment. Turning to a variant prose form -- the narrative of travel and adventure -- Butler undertook to work out his frustration with the processes of history; and his success in handling that form, first in The Great Lone Land (1872), and then in a sequel, The Wild North Land (1873), earned him a place in history which the authorship of a minor governmental document could not alone have warranted. What that place is, and how it came to be secured, will be the theme of the present chapter.

I have already touched on the role of Butler's The Great Lone Land as an event in the social history of western Canada, by virtue of its propaganda value; and I shall be discussing in later chapters its connection with the literary history of the prairies. What I wish to make particular note of at this point is an intriguing fact about Butler's two narratives of Northwest travel: that both have managed to establish a connection, albeit a somewhat adventitious one, with the literary and social history of Canada as a whole, by means of the reprint route. Each has been offered to the Canadian reading public under the auspices of an explicitly nationalistic publishing venture. The Wild North Land was included in the Trailmakers of Canada series early in the century, with an introduction by William Grant. And more recently, Mel Hurtig, Canadian nationalist par excellence, has returned both The Great Lone Land and its sequel to general circulation in Canada in his fine series of re-issues of books of travel and exploration in the

Canadian north and west. Hurtig, furthermore, in asking Edward McCourt to write introductions to these reprints, could hardly have made a more appropriate choice; for McCourt, in addition to his recognized contribution to western Canadian literary history in The Canadian West in Fiction, has also written the only existing biography of Butler, a book entitled Remember Butler.

Unsurprisingly, Edward McCourt and William Grant were agreed in their admiration for the books they had been called upon to introduce. They agreed, too, in admiring the man who wrote the books. Interestingly enough, for both men, it seemed natural to allow their admiration for the form the writing took to lead them on to definite biographical judgments. William Grant, for example, referring to Butler's "descriptions of the empty prairies, or of the still deeper melancholy of the pines, . . . full of Celtic magic and mystery," went on to say, "No-one can read 'The Wild North Land' without feeling for its author a loving sympathy for one so full of the joy and of the sadness of life."[4] This is very close to the position that Edward McCourt arrived at, both in his biography of Butler and in his introduction to the Hurtig edition, when he tried to account for the immense and lasting popularity of The Great Lone Land: although McCourt knew better than to be caught in so blatantly sentimental a critical pose.

One would not wish to place too much weight on McCourt's few critical pronouncements in the pages of Remember Butler. Few readers of biography, surely, would question McCourt's evident decision there to stress the travel narrative's usefulness as a biographical document, a means of characterizing the man who wrote it. The only remarks which McCourt specifically addressed to Butler's authorship of The Great Lone Land were these:

> The Great Lone Land is above all an intensely personal document -- the work of an enthusiastic idealist proud of his strength, confident of his abilities, still young enough to feel himself immortal, overflowing with sympathy for his less-fortunate fellow men and resolute to break a lance with any and all of their oppressors. Butler was to write many books; but none other with quite the same freshness, zest for living and curiosity for all things under the sun which help to make The Great Lone Land a classic in the literature of travel.[5]

A careful reader of the biography might also note one further comment on Butler's abilities as a writer of prose, when, in the closing pages of Remember Butler, McCourt alludes to "the stylistic excesses which mar some of his earlier work."[6] Lest the same careful reader, however, be tempted to make some connection between McCourt's phrase, "earlier work," and the two narratives of travel with which Butler established his reputation as an author, McCourt raises the possibility that he had in mind only Butler's official writing when he spoke of "stylistic excesses"; for although he commends the "immense readability" of Butler's report to the Canadian government, for example, he is also bound to concede that it "abounds in alliterative phrases, antithesis, extravagant imagery, genial asides and purple passages -- all the devices and affectations in which Butler took unaffected delight."[7] In sum, then, McCourt's biography of Butler is not complicated by issues of literary criticism. "Whatever his literary sins," McCourt wrote parenthetically at one point in the biography, "Butler is rarely dull."[8]

Yet when we collate these incidental comments on Butler's characteristics as a writer of prose, with the explanations which McCourt gives in his biography for Butler's repeated and extended travels in the Northwest of Canada, we begin to recognize a literary judgment in the making. For McCourt does not hesitate to assert that the prairie and parkland terrain of the west meant more to Butler than "even his native Tipperary," an alleged partiality which goes far to explain why McCourt might be willing to turn a blind eye to "stylistic excesses", or any other literary sins, should these crop up in the course of descriptions praising McCourt's own native heath.[9] And such, indeed, appears to be the case: for when McCourt comes to assess Butler's literary achievement in his introduction to the Hurtig edition of The Great Lone Land, his characterization of the book there, in addition to stressing the personality at the core of the narrative, makes specific claims for Butler as a stylist in prose.

> The Great Lone Land [writes McCourt in the Hurtig edition] has remained the most popular of all his works. And deservedly so. It is an exciting tale of adventure; it is a record of prime importance to the student of Western Canadian history; above all it is the revelation of a fascinating, many-sided personality -- of an impulsive humanitarian; a passionate individualist; and a lover of the great western spaces with an eye quick to discern the patterns and subtle nuances of a prairie landscape, and a pen able to record things seen and felt and heard in words which often rise to the level of poetry (GLL, xii).

In this summary of the book's claim to continued and 'deserved' regard on the part of the Canadian reading public, McCourt might at first sight appear to be making a subtle shift in his specification of what modern readers are likely to find of value in The Great Lone Land. "An intensely personal document" (from Remember Butler) -- a means of biographical inference -- is re-phrased in the Hurtig introduction to read, "the revelation of a fascinating, many-sided personality." The result is to suggest that McCourt means to point to the existence of a more recognizably literary achievement, the construction of a narrative persona. Nor would the reader be likely to question that the speaking voice in The Great Lone Land is all the things McCourt says he is: an impulsive humanitarian, a passionate individualist and a lover of the great western spaces. But as soon as the personality in question is placed before us in the act of wielding a pen, the narrative persona disappears, to be replaced by the familiar contours of what for McCourt was the historical Butler, the virile but tender-hearted young idealist of the biography's early chapters.

Edward McCourt's preoccupation here with the historical Butler, while natural enough in one who has been biographer as well as literary historian and critic, has certain results which bear on his estimate of The Great Lone Land as "a classic of travel literature." What these results are will be more easily understood if placed in the context of some biographical explication of a rather different kind than McCourt chose to provide. I propose, therefore, to interpret McCourt's brief comments in the Hurtig introduction in the light of certain relevant data from Butler's autobiography, published in 1911.

In the introduction to the Hurtig edition of The Great Lone Land, McCourt uses Butler's own words to explain his reasons for having so readily accepted Lieutenant-Governor Archibald's commission, quoting this passage from the Autobiography: "I had seen a sunset over the prairies, and the dream of it was ever in my mind -- a great golden mist, a big river flowing from it, a dark herd of buffaloes slowly moving across the prairie distance to drink at the river, and the sun himself seeming to linger above the horizon as though he wanted to have a longer look at the glory he had made below." On the strength of this testimony, McCourt writes for the modern reader's information, "The vast plains country -- which he had first visited as early as 1867 when his regiment had been sent to help guard the frontier against the Fenians -- was by this time in his blood" (GLL, x).[10] McCourt was right to insist on the fact of Butler's having seen the plains country on a prior occasion to his 1870 adventure. We would want, however, to look a little more closely at the circumstances of that first visit before attributing Butler's fascination with the prairie terrain to something so compelling as a virus infection of the blood.

Butler's introduction to the prairies had taken place shortly after his initial arrival in Canada in August 1867. His regiment, the 69th, had been posted to Brantford, in the heart of Ontario's richest agricultural district. Yet despite his enthusiasm for "this new scene of service . . . .so novel to me, and so full of the virility of a youthful people," it soon appeared to him that something essential was missing.[11] Recalling this episode, Butler wrote in his autobiography:

> In boyhood I had read the novels of Fenimore Cooper with an intensity of interest never to be known again in reading. "Leather Stocking," Lucas, Chingaghook, the Mohicans, the Hurons, the scenery of the Thousand Islands -- all these had been things quite as real to me in imagination as the actual scenes through which we were now passing. Only the Indians and the wild animals were wanting. Where were they?

"Gone from this West Canada," Butler was answered, "but still to be found west of the Mississippi and the Missouri." Butler obtained three months' leave of absence, having spent little more than a week at his new post of duty in western Ontario, and immediately "started out for the great West."[12]

In the autumn of 1867, a devotee of the novels of Fenimore Cooper had little choice but to look south of the Canadian border for "the great West." By and large the Indians of Canada -- the kind that Butler had in mind, in any event -- as well as the wild animals he sought, were concentrated in the territories still being administered by the Hudson's Bay Company; and although selected gentlemen travellers were given courteous aid in their sporting expeditions throughout the later fur trade period by the honourable Company, there still remained a definite problem of access for someone of Lieutenant Butler's unrecommended status. The Americans, on the other hand, had thoughtfully provided rail transportation to and beyond the frontier of settlement in their own great West. Butler proceeded by rail to Omaha, and then to Fort Kearney, then the end of track for the Pacific Railway.

At Kearney Station, near the Platte River, Butler found that "here was the mystic word 'prairie' at last a veritable reality. Since my early boyhood that word had meant to me everything that was possible in the breathing, seeing, and grasping of freedom."[13] Here, too, were the Indians and wild animals for which he had been looking in vain in West Canada. He spent a week at Fort Kearney, shooting buffalo in the company of officers of the American army stationed there to protect the railway construction from Indian attack.

In retrospect, the week seemed more than satisfactory. "Good fellowship, good stories round the festive board at night, hard riding and hunting all day over the glorious prairies," was how Butler summed it up in his autobiography.[14] He does not, unfortunately, repeat any of those stories for the benefit of his readers, so that conjecture becomes unavoidable; but we may safely surmise that among the stories were several dealing with the most recent outrages of the Sioux: the "Fetterman massacre" of less than a year before; the rash of murders on the North Platte; the spectacular attack by Red Cloud and his Oglala warriors on a wood-cutting party from an army post not far to the south; and the raids which Red Cloud had begun to mount as recently as August 7 of that same summer in the vicinity of Fort Kearney itself. Even as Butler and his army friends rode and hunted, in fact, commissioners from the United States government were waiting anxiously nearby for Red Cloud to come in to negotiate a peace.[15]

The only curb to his enjoyment which Butler was conscious of, however -- at least, as he tells it in his autobiography -- was the disturbing thought of how the Indians would be affected by the wholesale slaughter of the buffalo, which he could see going on around him, and to which, moreover, he had contributed his quota. But the ghost of Fenimore Cooper was routed by the forthright words of Colonel Dodge, "a distinguished officer of the army [and] one of the foremost frontier men of his time. . . . 'Kill every buffalo you can,' he said; 'every buffalo dead is an Indian gone.'"

In his autobiography, Butler indicated that he was inclined to agree with Colonel Dodge's assessment of the situation, having been persuaded not solely by the words of the distinguished officer and frontier man, but by his own observations of the prairies around Fort Kearney once the Indian and the buffalo had been forcibly removed. In a paragraph under the page heading, "The Coming Change," Butler wrote:

> [Colonel Dodge's advice] sounded hard then, and it seems hard now; but seven years after this time I crossed the railway from California to New York, and looking out at this same Platte Valley I saw it a smiling plain of farms, waving crops, and neat homesteads. The hungry crowd from overcharged Europe had surged into settlement over the old buffalo pastures of the Platte. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." It was right. These Crows, Cheyennes, Sioux, and Blackfeet Indians were no doubt splendid hunters, and fierce raiders, and crafty foemen but no man could say they were meek.[16]

It was hard, but it was right: this was Butler's final pronouncement on the extended movement to settle the western interior of North America, typified in his mind by the transformation of the buffalo pastures of the Platte. The movement was virtually complete by the time Butler's autobiography reached print. It was, furthermore, a movement in which Butler himself was more than once strongly tempted to join during the six years which separated his first visit to the Platte Valley, in the fall of 1867, and his last, in the summer of 1873. In contrast to the assured tone of the autobiographical account, however, the tensions visible in his travel writing suggest that at the time of his personal involvement in the coming change, the issues implicit in western settlement were far less capable of summary resolution. Instead, the veritable realities of an extended and complex period of social transition insisted time and time again on obtruding onto the simpler and rather more clear-cut realities which Butler had constructed from his boyhood reading. These contending realities form the core of interest of Butler's prose writing about the Canadian Northwest. In the travel narrative form, and then in a later, single work of fiction, Butler found congenial vehicles for giving shape to his conflicting personal responses to the historical process in which he himself was involved, both as witness and as participant, during the years of the formal opening of the Northwest to agricultural settlement.

The list of Butler's many publications over a lifetime suggests a fascination with the subject of history which was to become one of his dominating passions. His first attempt to break into authorship, in fact, was to write a history of his regiment, and this was actually his first published book. Throughout much of his later life, Butler devoted enormous researches to an account of Napolean's last days, producing a monumental volume that even his generous-minded biographer could not bring himself to defend. "As an objective historical study," McCourt wrote, "Napoleon on St. Helena does not deserve serious consideration," its over-riding faults being "dubious documentation" and "obsessive hero-worship."[17] Much of the research for Butler's first venture into historical writing, however, his Narrative of the Historical Events Connected With the Sixty-ninth Regiment (1870) was done during the eighteen months of his first tour of duty in Canada. From December 1867 to June 1869 Butler rode his circuit of inspection of defensive detachments in southwestern Ontario, all the time seeking out veterans of the 69th in order to collect their reminiscences.

Butler's peregrinations were at first confined to the Brantford area; then he was assigned to the region slightly to the west, in the neighbourhood of London in the Bush. It was, of course, from districts such as these that the first small beginnings of emigration to Manitoba originated in the late 1860's in Canada. In fact, it was precisely during the eighteen months which Butler spent riding around southwestern Ontario in pursuance of his duties, that the project of filling out the new Dominion of Canada from sea to sea was being most actively taken up, in Ottawa, in the press, and in the conversations of residents of the province.

In Manitoba: A History, W. L. Morton has summarized well the motives for western emigration among Ontario farmers as the 1860's came to a close:

> Everyone in Ontario had heard of the new frontier, with its prairie land which held neither stone nor stump to check the plough. Farmers on the thin soil of the Precambrian Shield in Lanark County, farmers hemmed in by the waters of Huron in Bruce and Huron counties, men with large families for whom to find farms, the hard pressed,

> the adventurous, all listened to the reports of deep soil to be had cheaply, of a climate where wheat throve free of midge and smut. Already thousands of Ontario farmers had moved to the prairies of the mid-western United States; now hundreds decided to seek the prairies of Manitoba.[18]

The "reports" to which these prospective emigrants listened emanated from a variety of sources: newspaper articles, pamphlets, private correspondences, and an incalculable number of word-of-mouth communications. In the winter of 1867-8, for example, residents of the province were invited to hear first-hand descriptions of the west and its resources by an individual who had lived and worked on the Saskatchewan for upwards of five years by that point in time: George Millward McDougall, Methodist missionary to the Cree and Stoney tribes of the far west. Speaking in all the towns and farming communities of any size in southern Ontario, McDougall (in the later words of his son John) "travelled the country in the interests of missions; and as many Canadians will remember, awakening them for the first time to a knowledge of this country /i.e., the west/."[19]

There is little to be gained by suggesting that the visits of George McDougall and William Francis Butler to the towns and villages of southwestern Ontario ever coincided during that winter of 1867-8, or that the two men were even remotely aware of each other's existence. The possibility exists, of course; but other factors beyond the caprice of coincidence operate against its real likelihood: among them, the improbability of a Roman Catholic officer attending meetings dominated by adherents of the Methodist

Church. What can be known with virtual certainty is that Butler could not have escaped hearing and reading a good deal about Canada's new western frontier during his eighteen months of service on the old frontier of Ontario.

Writing in his autobiography of the years 1867-1869, Butler informed his reader that they had been critical ones in shaping his plans for the future.

> Two years had not yet elapsed since I had landed [in Canada] for the first time; but what a change had these few months wrought in the aspect of life to my mind! . . . This great march that was ever going on -- all seemed to call with irresistible voice to throw one's little lot into the movement. It all seemed the exact opposite of the profession to which at this time I had given ten years of my life. There one seemed to be going round in a circle; here the line of march was straight west.[20]

The personal crisis for Butler lay in the contrast between his professional career in the army, which under the system of promotion by purchase still in effect in 1869 seemed to withhold any prospect of distinction from an impecunious young lieutenant, and the opportunities for economic and social advancement he saw displayed all around him. "The worst of professional disasters was happening to me," Butler wrote, "-- namely, being purchased over by junior subalterns for the rank of captain."[21] For someone of Butler's ambition, the word "disaster" does not in the least overstate the intense personal humiliation he felt at this check to his career.

Meanwhile, to the "irresistible voice" of the great march west was added the persuasive voice of one Horatio Nelson Case, a chance acquaintance who, early in 1869, offered Butler a share in a land deal at Petrolia, just outside the town of London. Oil had recently been discovered there, and new wells were being ventured. It was at this juncture that Butler, according to his own account, decided to throw his little lot into the movement. Again taking leave of absence from his regiment, he returned to Britain to borrow four hundred pounds from relatives, there to await word from Case that their joint speculation in real estate could be made to turn a sizable profit.[22]

During Butler's six months in Britain, in the latter part of 1869, the negotiations concerning the Transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada were entering their final stages. Surveyors were dispatched by Dominion officials to Fort Garry in anticipation of the opening of the Northwest to agricultural settlement. Then, with the outbreak of resistance among Red River's inhabitants at their being thus unceremoniously absorbed into Canada's political and territorial ambitions, the surveyors were withdrawn, and hasty efforts made to supply their place with an armed force of repression, drawn from British regulars (including the 69th, by this time stationed in Quebec City) and from members of Canadian militia units, many of whom were young men from the farming districts of Ontario, eager to see for themselves the attractions of the new frontier.

As for Butler himself, the timing of the Métis resistance was fortuitous indeed. Obliged in any event by the expiration of his leave of absence to rejoin his regiment in Canada, he now foresaw a chance, in the prospect of active service against the insurgents of Red River, to earn (since he could not afford to purchase) his coveted promotion to the rank of captain. Butler had this advantage too, that his pleasure jaunt of three years before to the buffalo pastures of the Platte had given him not only a personal acquaintance with the general nature of the interior plains region, but some notion of a considerably more direct route to the scene of the Métis uprising than that proposed for the soldiers of the Expeditionary Force by John A. Macdonald's ministry. Butler's suggestion to the Force's senior officers, that he reconnoitre the southern flank of the projected march by travelling to Fort Garry *via* Minnesota, was not exactly a shot in the dark. Once again Butler headed for the station to catch the next train for the great West.

Moreover, if Garnet Wolseley is any authority on the matter, Butler appears to have parlayed his previous experiences in the great West into something rather more impressive than a brief, off-duty visit to an American army post; for in *Blackwoods* of 1872 Wolseley wrote, "General Lindsay had therefore sent a sharp intelligent officer *who knew the north-west country and its people*, round through the United States to Pembina" (my italics).[23] Butler knew something at first hand, to be sure, of prairies, Indians and buffalo; but any information he may have possessed on "the north-west country and its people" prior to June 1870, was second-hand.

For the actual events of Butler's tour of travel in the Northwest in 1870-71, the reader is referred to Edward McCourt's biography, and to the text of *The Great Lone Land* itself. What I wish to bring into the spotlight in the remaining pages of this chapter are several events which remain very much in the background in both those sources: personal circumstances in Butler's life and career which bore directly on his rendering of his travels once he turned to authorship.

For example: Butler, in describing his return to "the confines of civilization" fifty miles west of Fort Garry, in February 1871, wrote in The Great Lone Land, "It is time to close. It was my lot to shift the scene of life with curious rapidity. In a shorter space of time than it had taken to traverse the length of the Saskatchewan, I stood by the banks of that river whose proud city had just paid the price of conquest in blood and ruin" (GLL, 352) -- by which he means the city of Paris, France. In such a manner does Butler, in the travel book, telescope the narrative of his movements after handing in his report to Lieutenant-Governor Archibald in early March. As a result of this compression, the reader for whom the narrative persona is indistinguishable from the historic Lieutenant Butler would naturally assume that, in accordance with a running sub-theme in the book, Butler posted as quickly as possible to France, in order to offer his services as soldier-adventurer to the valiant people who had long been the object of his devoted admiration.

The autobiography, however, tells a rather different story. Butler did not go straight to France. Instead, he went to Ottawa. There, at the suggestion of Archibald, he interviewed senior government officials -- John A. Macdonald, Georges Cartier, Joseph Howe, Francis Hincks -- in an effort to have himself appointed to the job his own report had advocated, that of "Civil Magistrate or Commissioner" (GLL, 381). "It was the wish of Governor Archibald," he wrote in his autobiography, "that I should return to the North-West, officially charged to take in hand the opening up of that vast region, carrying into practical effect the principles of Indian settlement, the establishment of a police, and the foundation of Government stations which I had advocated in my report."[24] Failing such an appointment, Butler might have settled for the position of Indian Commissioner, having particularly cautioned the government in his report of the need to make its selection in filling this appointment with the utmost care (GLL, 384). But he was to be disappointed on both counts. The Canadian ministers offered him nothing more than polite remarks:

> They were highly complimentary, said nice things about the three thousand miles' travel in the wilderness, most of it through snow and ice, and with the thermometer hovering somewhere about the zero of Fahrenheit; hemmed and hawed when it came to Governor Archibald's recommendation as to the commandantship of the North-West, and laid particular stress upon the letter they were writing to the Colonial and the War Offices in London on the subject of my services to Canada generally.[25]

Although Butler knew a run-around when he saw one, he had little choice but to follow up this consolatory promise. He hastened to London, "feeling certain that I had now run the elusive quarry, Success, to his last haunt." His certainty, however, proved to be ill-founded. To his chagrin, he was refused the promotion he asked for at the War Office.

> I had now twelve years' service. I had been five or six times purchased over by officers, most of whom were many years junior to me. I was told by all those heads of departments, military and civil, that I had done the State some service. The reward asked for, a half-pay company, did not seem to be a very large act of recognition; nevertheless, the reply came curt and chilling, 'Mr. Cardwell could not sanction the promotion of Lieutenant Butler.'[26]

It was only on receipt of this second disappointment that a thoroughly cast-down Butler left for France, arriving in time to see "the blank windows of the Tuileries red with the light of flames fed from five hundred years of history" (GLL, 352).

According to the autobiography, the sight of Paris in defeat, coming immediately on the heels of his professional setbacks, and placed in the perspective of his recent experiences in the Northwest of Canada, fixed in Butler's mind a "hopelessness of all this social world of our so-called civilization."

> I went to Ireland, and began at once to write a book on those great lone spaces of the earth which I had quitted only a few weeks earlier. It seemed so strange that there should be these vast, vacant lands, while here the city-pent millions were murdering each other with such ferocity, and I longed, too, to get back to the wilds again. In the army there seemed to be no chance for me.[27]

"This social world of our so-called civilization," then, had two strikes against it in Butler's mind when he set about writing The Great Lone Land. One was that it had repeatedly failed "the people, . . . the men who had nothing, . . . these submerged millions" of Europe.[28] The second was that it left no scope for Butler himself to achieve confirmation of his own self-worth at a time of crisis in his professional life.

Yet the evidence of The Great Lone Land itself suggests that the blockade to his army career was not solely a question of professional advancement to Butler. Butler, we must remember, was a Roman Catholic and Irishman; although his family was an ancient and an honourable one, he had gone to the 'wrong' schools; and he had no money with which to buy either his army promotion, or the attention of society in general, à la Mr. Veneering. Nonetheless, Butler himself seems to have felt that he possessed all the attributes of a gentleman that education and breeding could bestow: a passionate attachment to high ideals, commitment to a life of service to the State, a fine sensitivity to aesthetic stimuli, impeccable taste in clothes, and a poised and ironic prose style. Unfortunately, these attributes were not enough to win promotion in the army from Mr. Cardwell. Butler's protest against the injustice of it all perforce took an oblique route, through the pages of The Great Lone Land. Forced, both by Mr. Cardwell and by the ministers in Ottawa, into the unbecoming position of having to assert on his own behalf his qualifications for the acknowledged social status of an officer and a gentleman, he undertook to do so through the exercise of an eminently genteel pursuit, the writing of a book of travel and adventure.

It is this overlay, then, of social aspiration which I believe to have been insufficiently brought out by other analysts of Butler's life and writing. This is the element which Edward McCourt and William Grant both miss entirely when, in Remember Butler, the former describes Butler as "among soldier-travellers the best writer of them all;"[29] and the latter, in introducing the first Canadian edition of The Wild North Land, asserts that "he could write the English language in a manner rare among soldiers" (WNL, xiii). Granted that Butler would have gratefully received both these commendations on his literary achievements, the fact still remains that when he sat down to write The Great Lone Land, the conviction was upon him that "in the army there seemed to be no chance for me." Neither his own superiors in the British military, nor the government in Ottawa, had showed themselves willing to help him grasp "the elusive quarry, Success," despite the considerable amounts of time, energy and intelligence which he had devoted during the five previous years, first to the defense of older Canada, and then to the problems of the coming change in Canada's newest territory. Faced with these painful demonstrations of the world's ingratitude to its most deserving servants, Butler chose to beat a strategic retreat into the comforting arms of Cooper.

We have it, moreover, on the authority of Butler himself that such a retreat was essentially what he had in mind in his later nostalgic reconstructions of the west. This confession comes not, in this instance, from the autobiography, but from a volume of 1881, Far Out: Rovings Retold. Chapter II of that volume begins:

> A year and a half had passed away [since Butler had left Manitoba]. The reality of the wilderness had become a dream. Idealised by distance and separation -- the camp, the lonely meadow, the dim pine woods, the snow-capped mountains, the mighty hush of nature as the great solitude sank at sunset into the sleep of night -- all had come back to me in a thousand scenes of memory; and in the midst of the rush and roar of a great city, I had seen, as though in another world, the long vista of unnumbered meadows lying at the gateway of the sunset.

Surely, in the light of Butler's words here -- "The reality of the wilderness had become a dream" -- we have no choice but to respect Butler's own phrasing of his circumstances: the dream was in his mind, not the country in his blood. The dream had been there since boyhood; and once Butler was separated, by time and distance, from the veritable realities of social and political change in the west, the dream reasserted its dominance, finding expression in those romantic evocations of landscape which William Grant, Edward McCourt, and Pierre Berton (not to mention, apparently, some several hundred thousand readers over the past century) have all found to be evidence of exceptional literary talent. In which case, it is surely beyond question that Butler's primary intent in The Great Lone Land was not documentary -- the provision of a "prime record for the student of western Canadian history," to quote McCourt's introduction to the Hurtig reprint -- but literary: the construction of an artifact, within the bounds of an established and quite easily recognized literary culture.

How this intent was borne out can be demonstrated by the critic of literature through analysis of the major component parts of his achievement, these being the elements of characterization, theme, and structure, in the first instance. Most emphatically is it borne out, however, in the prose style which Butler adopted for his narrative of travel, the style which McCourt recommends to us as rising on occasion "to the level of poetry." It is in the exercise of this style that we can recognize most clearly the operations of a 'point of view' dramatically at variance with the point of view which Butler had exhibited in his official report to government of only eleven months before.

IV

THE FULL GLORY OF THE INDIVIDUAL "I"

Of the four areas in which the literary qualities of The Great Lone Land may be most readily discerned -- characterization, theme, structure and style -- it has been the last of these which, for a majority of Butler's readers over the years, has lent particular distinction to his name as a writer of travel narratives. The peculiar qualities of that much-admired style, however, are so closely related to aspects of theme, structure, and above all, characterization, that I propose to confine the present chapter to these three latter elements of The Great Lone Land, leaving rhetorical analysis for the chapter to follow.

The subject of characterization in The Great Lone Land demands little of the critic beyond recognition of Butler's techniques in projecting a narrative persona. Aside from the narrator, there are few characters in Butler's narrative who stick in the mind from a reading of the book -- Riel, certainly, as well as Garnet Wolseley and Father Lacombe; but not more than a handful of others. In part this is because Butler characteristically abstains from assigning names to the actual individuals whom he met in the Northwest; and of those he does identify, few draw more than a bare reference. In this way such figures as Thomas Scott, Lepine, Donaghue, "Mr. Governor M'Dougall" (William McDougall, Archibald's ill-starred predecessor as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba), Archbishop Cowley, and the Ojibway chief Henry Prince are introduced to the reader, but only in passing, and seldom in any significant degree of detail. (Into this category, incidentally, falls "a young half-breed named Battenotte, who will be better known perhaps to the English reader when I say that he was the son of the Assineboine guide who conducted Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle through the pine forests of the Thompson River" (GLL, 251).) By and large, this group of characters remain names, and names only; while a rather larger number of individuals are denied even this mark of distinction by Butler. Instead they remain cloaked in the anonymity of "the Hudson's Bay officer" (not one of the Company's employees is named in the narrative), "the worthy clergyman," "the half-breed," "the dusky warrior," "a Western missionary," and the like. As a result, the subject of characterization in this book narrows down to the single, central figure in the story -- the narrative persona, the speaking voice who recounts his travels and adventures to the reader.

That The Great Lone Land is thoroughly dominated by the personality of this speaking voice is fully evident even to the most casual reader. Indeed, Butler's recourse to self-directed irony, when he writes on page 6 of his intention to exchange the impersonal narrative voice of the first few pages for "the full glory of the individual 'I'," may well represent the author's desire to forestall the charge of too much personalism in his rendering of events. In his preface, he was more direct. Having been told that the publisher's reader had "thought highly of my descriptions of real occurrences, but less of my theories," Butler offered this brief defense:

> Almost every page of this book has been written amid the ever-present pressure of those feelings which spring from a sense of unrequited labour, of toil and service theoretically and officially recognized, but practically and professionally denied. However, a personal preface is not my object, nor should these things find allusion here, save to account in some manner, if account be necessary, for peculiarities of language or opinion which may hereafter make themselves apparent to the reader (GLL, xv).

It is therefore at Butler's own invitation that the reader may detect, in the particular version of The Northwest Traveller As Hero offered in Butler's book, the extended self-justification of one whose ambition is to be recognized -- and rewarded -- as one of "the natural soldiers of the world" (GLL, 168).

This phrase, "the natural soldiers of the world," is Butler's own, and he applies it not (of course) to himself, but to his commanding officer, Garnet Wolseley. If we are reading with attention, however, we cannot help being made aware that the Northwest Traveller who narrates this book shares with Wolseley many of the requisite personal characteristics for commanding officers: perseverance, energy, initiative (what Butler calls "the natural instinctive faculty of doing a thing from oneself,") and an inborn capacity for leadership (GLL, 168-9). Is there a decision to be made, a river to be crossed, an obstacle to be outflanked, a "whole situation" to be "reviewed in a moment" (GLL, 8)? Never fear, the narrator will rise to the occasion, and always without delay.

Muddle is his abomination; bungling is what other people do.

> Who was then to blame for the mismanagement of the transfer . . . ? I answer that the blame of having bungled the whole business belongs collectively to all the great and puissant bodies [i.e., the Hudson's Bay Company and the Imperial and Dominion governments]. Any ordinary, matter-of-fact, sensible man would have managed the whole affair in a few hours; but so many high and potent powers ~~had~~ to consult together, to pen despatches, to speechify, and to lay down the law about it, that the whole affair became hopelessly muddled. Of course, ignorance and carelessness were, as they always are, at the bottom of it all (GLL, 42).

The consistency with which this cheerful competence is maintained in projecting the persona of the narrator in The Great Lone Land is a considerable achievement in itself, seen simply from the point of view of literary analysis. As it happens, however, this self-characterization is also one which provides a large measure of protective coloration for statements of judgment which range from the wildly unorthodox to the merely quirky. Consider, for example, Butler's defense of Riel, in this passage on the Métis uprising in Fort Garry: "It is almost refreshing to notice the ability, the energy, the determination which up to this point had characterized all the movements of the originator and mainspring of the movement, M. Louis Riel. One hates so much to see a thing bungled, that even resistance, although it borders upon rebellion, becomes respectable when it is carried out with courage, energy, and decision" (GLL, 38). Coming from the advance courier and spy of Wolseley's repressive expeditionary force, the sending of which had occasioned much trouble and expense to the Canadian and British governments, this interpretation of political priorities would not normally be considered in character. Certainly Wolseley himself, in describing the Expedition's aims to British readers in Blackwood's, was careful to take a much more conventional line on the matter:

> The English flag had been pulled down, and the standard of rebellion had been raised at Fort Garry. A man loyal to his queen had been murdered, loyalty having been his crime. Men were imprisoned and robbed without even the mockery of a trial. The perpetrators of these crimes believed that the wilderness which separated them from civilisation would secure them from punishment; but the manner in which our Expedition performed its allotted task, proved that no distance or intervening obstacles can afford protection to those who outrage our laws.[1]

Seen, however, in the context of an established persona, Butler's decision to pay tribute to the personal virtues of a gallant enemy leader (gallant, at least, up to the unfortunate moment when he branded himself for all time as a murderer in cold blood), could almost have been predicted.

Yet if one were to take up the implications of Butler's procedure here, one would arrive at a conclusion with rather far-reaching consequences. To contend, as Butler does, that Riel's energy, courage and decision are enough to make armed resistance "respectable," is in effect to argue that the personal characteristics of the agent can neutralize, or render irrelevant, any merely conventional impulse to pass judgment on the act. It all depends, as Butler sees it, on how the thing is done: as the "I" of the narrative, he seems prepared to excuse much in the face of competence and flair. As a means of arriving at political decisions this principle is an equivocal one at best; but Butler does not reserve it for affairs of the state alone. In fact, its workings as a characteristic mode of literary procedure are everywhere evident in The Great Lone Land.

To demonstrate what I mean here, I would refer the reader to the episode of the death of Butler's horse, Blackie, caught in the half-frozen waters of the South Saskatchewan River in early November, 1870 (the episode is to be found on pages 220-227 of the Hurtig edition). The description of this harrowing experience has probably convinced thousands of readers over the years that Butler was indeed an impulsive humanitarian. Hard-hearted indeed must be the critic who could fail to be moved by the depiction of Blackie's struggles in the swiftly-moving current of the ice-filled river, or of the narrator's feelings of horror and helplessness as he watched from the river's edge. As Butler describes the scene, "I rushed back to the shore and up to the camp where my rifle lay, then back again to the fatal spot where the poor beast still struggled against his fate. As I raised the rifle he looked at me so imploringly that my hand shook and trembled. Another instant, and the deadly bullet crashed through his head, and, with one look never to be forgotten, he went down under the cold, unpitying ice!" Then, explaining his subsequent outbreak of tears, Butler goes on, "With my own hand I had taken my poor friend's life; but if there should exist somewhere in the regions of space that happy Indian paradise where horses are never hungry and never tired, Blackie, at least, will forgive the hand that sent him there, if he can but see the heart that long regretted him" (GLL, 226-7). Blackie, at least, will forgive: but so, too, presumably, should Butler's emotionally-primed readers, given this incontrovertible evidence of humanitarian sentiment.

And it is at this point that we realize the treachery which any rigorously biographical interpretation of Butler's motives and movements poses to the narrative. For the awkward fact of the matter is that "poor Blackie," -- "poor horse . . ., poor brute . . ., poor friend" -- had a great deal more to forgive his master than merely his merciful release from suffering. As any long-time resident of the region would have known in a moment, Blackie's death had been entirely needless, having been the direct consequence of the historical Butler's culpable want of judgment in attempting to force a passage across the South Saskatchewan, when delay to allow the ice to form would clearly have been the more reasonable course of action.

Yet any such mean-spirited objection to Butler's handling of this episode must contend against the thoroughness with which Butler grounds his decision to ignore this elementary rule of North-west travel in the over-riding requirements of the narrative persona, an individual who on at least two previous occasions has declared his belief that rapid forward movement overcomes all obstacles (GLL, 88, 91-2), and who furthermore on this occasion insists that sufficient justification for his pressing on with his journey lay, quite simply, in his own impatience to keep moving. "There were many reasons to make this delay feel vexatious and disappointing," Butler wrote by way of preparing the reader for the ensuing description of Blackie's death; but the only reason from among his list which survives even his own examination is the first one that has come to his mind: "We had travelled a distance of 560 miles in twelve days, travelled only to find ourselves stopped by this partially frozen river at a point twenty miles distant from Carlton, the first great station on my journey" (GLL, 222). That is to say, no reason at all, beyond the implicit requirement to display that courage, energy and decision which mark the military leader under any and all circumstances.

Not as military man alone, however, does the Northwest Traveller of this tale appear before his readers. Having shown himself to be one of the natural soldiers of the world, he is nonetheless a soldier of sensibility, as the "poor Blackie" episode demonstrates beyond question. From the very outset, in fact, the narrator presents himself as a man who thinks and feels as well as acts; who looks with concern on the major moral issues of his time, and seeks to establish clearly his own relation to those issues. In such a manner does characterization merge into theme, as the narrator sets out to explore the unknown territories of the west, and finds there "mental property" in abundance.

The phrase "mental property" occurs very near the beginning of the book. Butler is into Chapter III by this point, Chapter I having described his professional blockade, and Chapter II standing as the de rigueur chapter on shipboard eccentrics, a chapter which no well-regulated book of travel to America could omit to offer. But Butler is not out to write just another "stock-book of travel" (GLL, 26); conscious of the uniqueness of his materials, he stops short of the no less *de rigueur* chapter on the cities of the eastern seaboard, writing by way of notification of this departure from the usual format of the *genre*:

> Meantime we must away. Boston and New York have had their stories told frequently enough -- and, in reality, there is not much to tell about them. The world does not contain a more uninteresting accumulation of men and houses than the great city of New York; it is a place wherein the stranger feels inexplicably lonely. The traveller has no mental property in this city whose enormous growth of life has struck scant roots into the great heart of the past (*GLL*, 26).

Having given this notification, Butler then advances what amounts to the central thematic statement of his book, a summary of the three stages of the westward march of settlement, which he describes thus: "Our course, however, lies west. We will trace the onward stream of empire in many portions of its way, we will reach its limits, and pass farther still, where the solitude knows not of its approach and the Indian still reigns in savage supremacy."

The "onward stream of empire" and its "limits" occupy the narrator during the next hundred pages of the book, a segment enlivened chiefly by Butler's account of his cloak-and-dagger relations with the Métis of Fort Garry. Having once arrived at the Ojibway settlement to the north, however, the "I" of the narrative shows his determination to commemorate the occasion in fitting terms:

> Poor red man of the great North-west, I am at last in your land! Long as I have been hearing of you and your wild doings, it is only here that I have reached you on the confines of the far-stretching Winnipeg. It is no easy task to find you now, for one has to travel far into the lone spaces of the Continent before the smoke of your wigwam or of your tepie blurs the evening air.
>
> But henceforth we will be companions for many months, and through many varied scenes, for my path lies amidst the lone spaces which are still your own; by the rushing rapids

> where you spear the great "namha" (sturgeon) will we light the evening fire and lie down to rest, lulled by the ceaseless thunder of the torrent; the lone lakeshore will give us rest for the midday meal, and from your frail canoe, lying like a sea-gull on the wave, we will get the "mecuhaga" (the blueberry) and the "wa-wa," (the goose) giving you the great medicine of the white man, the thé and suga in exchange. But I anticipate (GLL, 125-6).

What Butler 'anticipates' here is the major thematic concern of the remaining two-thirds of the book. This theme is what Butler more than once calls the "story" of racial conflict in North America, as agricultural settlement infringes on "the lone spaces which are still [the Indians'] own." "Search the books of travel amongst remote Indian tribes," he writes, "from Columbus to Catlin, from Charlevois to Carver, from Bonneville to Pallisser, the story is ever the same" (GLL, 244): the story being that of the noble Indian's education in treachery and greed by the depraved specimens of the white race who invariably lead the way for the incoming population.

This phenomenon, according to Butler's description of it, is uniform throughout the continent: "It is the same story from Atlantic to Pacific. First the white man was the welcome guest, the honoured visitor; then the greedy hunter, the death-dealing vendor of fire-water and poison; then the settler and exterminator -- everywhere it has been the same story" (GLL, 242). Only in the Saskatchewan district of the Canadian territories does Butler profess to see the possibility of a variation in the script; and even here the difference does not amount to anything significant. "The Crees," he writes, "are perhaps the only tribe of prairie Indians who have as yet suffered no injustice at the hands of the white man. The land is still theirs, the hunting-grounds remain almost undisturbed; but their days are numbered, and already the echo of the approaching wave of Western immigration is sounding through the solitudes of the Cree country" (GLL, 242).

In his biography of Butler, Edward McCourt wrote that "Butler's admiration for the Indian was curiously founded. It is quite literally true that to the end of his life when he thought of the Indian his imagination conjured up a picture not of the red men whom he had actually met, talked and worked with on the western plains, but of Fenimore Cooper's idealized braves."[2] It is likely that Butler himself would have resented McCourt's use of the word "curiously" here. Certainly it was with considerable vehemence that the narrator of The Great Lone Land contended his case that, in the event of any hard choices having to be made, "the sympathy of any brave heart must lie on the side of the savage" (GLL, 268). It all had to do, as he saw it, with one's definition of civilized behaviour, Anglo-Saxons as a racial type having repeatedly shown themselves to be, if not savages, then certainly brutes, for all their professed superiority to the Indian. Their treatment of the Indians of North America was just one more example, in his eyes, of "that low brutality which has ever made the Anglo-Saxon race deny its enemy the possession of one atom of generous sensibility" (GLL, 243). Moreover, current developments in the onward stream of empire offered to the observer a spectacle of brutality which was at its height (or depth) of infamy "at the moment in which we write":

> Never at any time since first the white man was welcomed on the newly-discovered shores of the Western Continent by his red brother, never has such disaster and destruction overtaken these poor wild, wandering sons of nature as at the moment in which we write. Of yore it was the pioneers of France, England, and Spain with whom they had to contend, but now the whole white world is leagued in bitter strife against the Indian. The American and Canadian are only names that hide beneath them the greed of united Europe. . . . My God, what a terrible tale could I not tell of . . . dark deeds done by the white savage against the far nobler red man! . . . "Kill every buffalo you see," said a Yankee colonel to me one day in Nebraska; "every buffalo dead is an Indian gone;" such things are only trifles (GLL, 240).

To an observer who was proud to trace his education in North American history to Irving, Cooper and Longfellow, "bright spirits who have redeemed the America of to-day from the dreary waste of vulgar greed and ignorant conceit which we in Europe have flung so heavily on her" (GLL, 244), the portent of coming tragedy was manifest in the abandoned territories of the Sioux in Minnesota. The narrator records:

> Nothing remains of the red man save these sounding names of lake and river which long years ago he gave them. Along the margins of these lakes many comfortable dwellings nestle amongst oak openings and glades, and hill and valley are golden in summer with fields of wheat and corn, and little towns are springing up where twenty years ago the Sioux lodgepoles were the only signs of habitation; but one cannot look on this transformation without feeling, with Longfellow, the terrible surge of the white man, "whose breath, like the blast of the east wind, drifts everymore to the west the scanty smoke of the wigwams" (GLL, 89-90).

What is more, the same terrible surge can be seen to be gathering strength in the territories north of the border, as the narrator encounters in the settlement at Red River the identical type of Anglo-American "white savage" which has already effected the transformation of Minnesota. "Stragglers from the east" have made their way to the settlement; and here is what Butler has to say about them:

> The early settlers in a Western country are not by any means persons much given to the study of abstract justice, still less to its practice; and it is as well, perhaps, that they should not be. They have rough work to do, and they generally do it roughly. The very fact of their coming so far into the wilderness implies the other fact of their not being able to dwell quietly and peaceably at home. They are, as it were, the advanced pioneers of civilization who make smooth the way of the coming race. Obstacles of any kind are their peculiar detestation -- if it is a tree, cut it down; if it is a savage, shoot it down; if it is a half-breed, force it down. That is about their creed, and it must be said that they act up to their convictions (GLL, 40).

Continuing with his brief historical essay on the events preceding the Métis resistance, the narrator then goes on to describe the specific grounds of cultural conflict between the Métis inhabitants, and "the English-Canadian party, the pioneers of the Western settlement already alluded to" (GLL, 45):

> These straggling pioneers had on many an occasion taunted the vain half-breed with what would happen when the irresistible march of events had thrown the country into the arms of Canada: then civilization would dawn upon the benighted country, the half-breed would seek some western region, the Company would disappear, and all the institutions of New World progress would shed prosperity over the land; prosperity, not to the old dwellers and of the old type, but to the newcomers and of the new order of things. Small wonder, then, if the little community, resenting all this threatened improvement off the face of the earth, got their powder-horns ready, took the covers off their trading flint-guns, and with much gesticulation summarily interfered with several anticipatory surveys of their farms, doubling up the sextant, bundling the surveying parties out of their freeholds. . . (GLL, 41).

Yet the sequel shows that the politics of western settlement is not a subject which can hold this narrator's interest for long. The whole affair, he decides, is but "a tempest in a tea-cup" after all (GLL, 114, 192); the mental property he seeks lies still farther to the west. "Into the immediate sectional disputes and religious animosities of the present movement it is not my intention to enter," the narrator states; "as I journey on an occasional arrow may be shot to the right or to the left at men and things, but I will leave to others the details of a petty provincial quarrel, while I have before me, stretching far and wide, the vast solitudes which await in silence the footfall of the future" (GLL, 112).

"The vast solitudes which await in silence the footfall of the future" were, of course, the same geographical regions in which "the Indian still reigns in savage supremacy." That Butler saw these solitudes, however, as something more than mere territorial space, can be gauged by the change in the narrator's tone whenever the subject of the Indian comes to the fore. For in contrast to the prevailing irony in which Butler couched virtually all his observations on the whites and half-breeds of North America, The Poor Red Man of the Northwest elicits from the narrator of this book a consistent and, one might almost say, compulsive attitude of pity.

"Poor Red Man of the great North-west," the narrator had remarked, "anticipating" these reflections garnered on the shores of Lake Winnipeg:

> As I sat watching from a little distance this picture so full of all the charms of the wild life of the voyageur and the Indian, I little marvelled that the red child of the lakes and the woods should be loth to quit such scenes for all the luxuries of our civilization. Almost as I thought with pity over his fate, seeing here the treasures of nature which were his, there suddenly emerged from the

> forest two dusky forms. They were Ojibbeways, who had come to share our fire and our evening meal. The land was still their own (GLL, 140).

The narrator thinks with pity over the Indian's fate because, (as he has made clear at many points in the narrative) he can see no alternative to the inexorable and tragic westward movement of agricultural settlement -- "that army whose rearguard reaches to the Vistula," as Butler was to write in The Wild North Land (on page 21). While he thinks with pity on the Indians, the footfall of the future sounds ominously in his ears like the march of hob-nailed boots, as pioneers move westward to make smooth the way of the coming race -- cutting, shooting, forcing down the obstacles in their path. In short, he foresees that in western Canada, as elsewhere in North America, the story will be ever the same. The only consolation he can find is this: that vindication of the Indians is certain to take place, the documents for their eventual justification being precisely those writings in prose and verse on which he himself has drawn for the outlines of his history of western settlement. "No," he writes, "they are fast going, and soon they will all be gone, but in after-times men will judge more justly the poor wild creatures whom to-day we kill and villify; men will go back again to those old books of travel, or to those pages of "Hiawatha" and "Mohican" to find that far away from the border-land of civilization the wild red man, if more of the savage, was infinitely less of the brute than was the white ruffian who destroyed him" (GLL, 244-5).

To the present generation (as to, in all probability, the several preceding ones who have joined in establishing The Great Lone

Land as a classic of travel literature), Butler's portrayal in this book of past, present, and future race relations in the west may well read like prescient and noble-minded analysis. Yet considered in relation to the government report which Butler had written only a year before, immediately upon his return to Fort Garry in February 1871, the point of view which Butler adopted for his narrative surely invites some comment. In his report, Butler had indeed shown an intelligent and humane concern for the treatment of the aboriginal peoples. Nonetheless, his point of view in that document had been pragmatic as well as abstractly ethical: the Indians must be well treated, he had argued there, not only because justice demanded such consideration, but because to proceed otherwise would delay settlement and occasion great expense to the Canadian government. By the time he came to write the travel book, however, his perspective on western settlement had undergone a basic shift in emphasis. The wave of immigration had turned into an army, and with its invasion into the prairie west, savage races -- white and red -- were fated to engage in a contest which could only end with the final extinction of the Indian. Consequently, what Butler constructs for the reader of The Great Lone Land is an elegy for a dying race, and a concomitant rebuke to the victors, the coming generation of Anglo-Canadian pioneers.

It is within the framework, then, of this recognizably "literary" history of the opening stages of western settlement in Canada, that the reader is to interpret what, if taken at face value, stands as an otherwise inexplicable statement of historical fact. With the collapse of the Métis resistance, so the reader learns, there was no need for the soldiers of Wolseley's Expedition to remain in Fort Garry; thus the troops pulled out for Canada early in September, followed a few days later by Colonel Wolseley. With the departure of these men, the narrator goes on to inform his readers, "I was left alone in Fort Garry" (GLL, 194). Alone, that is, with fifteen thousand drunken and cowardly Métis, enfeebled mission Indians, and ruffianly white pioneers.

The narrator does not, of course, phrase the fact of his cultural isolation in terms so certain to cause offense as these. Nonetheless, his inference is unmistakable, if we take the trouble to read with attention the narrator's overt and covert judgments on the vast majority of the actual individuals and groups of people he was introduced to in the west. These range from the comic spectacle of Henry Prince, sleepily fumbling with the buttons of his trousers, to the posturing of Riel himself, "absurd" in his frock-coat and moccasins (GLL, 137, 133). Furthermore, it is from essentially the same sense of standing apart from his companions that the narrator claims, upon completion of his journey to Fort Francis in company with five Indian and Métis voyageurs, "My long solitary journey had nearly reached its close" (GLL, 166).

Whether by accident or design, it happens that each of these unequivocal statements of cultural solitude coincides with a critical point in the narrative structure of the book. Each marks the close of a series of adventures, with the longer of the two, the return journey up the Winnipeg, reaching its climax in the narrator's observation, "I was left alone in Fort Garry. . . . My long journey seemed finished, but I was mistaken, for it was only about to begin." Thus Butler alerts his readers that another long journey is to follow, the journey to Rocky Mountain House and back. Although in all probability, the majority of Butler's readers remember the description of this second journey as forming the bulk of his narrative, in fact it takes up slightly less than half the book, from page 195 to the end.

Since it was a round trip, the pattern of travel for this second long journey provided Butler with a natural break in the narrative. At Rocky Mountain House, his western terminus, Butler paused for eight days before returning east. And once again, speaking as the narrator, he seizes an opportunity to underline his continuing sense of isolation in the west, an isolation that is more than simply geographical. The occasion comes in Chapter XVIII, as the narrator pointedly establishes his awareness of the contrast between the naiveté of his countryborn guides, and the European orbit of his own preoccupations. That the chapter in question was intended to draw attention, we can infer with reasonable confidence from its unusual brevity -- two pages, in comparison with an average of thirty pages for all the other chapters in the book. Opening the chapter, the narrator describes how he must enlighten his ignorant Métis companions as to obvious facts of existence outside the borders of Rupert's Land (No, the Rockies are not the highest mountains in the world, and, No again, the Hudson's Bay Company does not govern the whole world the way it governs in the west). But his listener's reception of this information, to his amusement, only demonstrates once more the Métis' unalterable parochialism: "I was obliged to admit that the Company did not exist in the country of these very big mountains, and I rather fear that the admission somewhat detracted from the altitude of the Himalayas in the estimation of my hearers" (GLL, 292). He, on the other hand, suffers from no such handicap; his thoughts, unlike theirs, can range the world. And to emphasize this point, he immediately goes on to tell how a "very remarkable light" suddenly appeared one morning before daybreak in the sky over his camp.

> As I looked at it, my thoughts travelled far away to the proud city by the Seine. Was she holding herself bravely against the German hordes? In olden times these weird lights of the sky were supposed only to flash forth when "kings or heroes" fell. Did the sky mirror the earth, even as the ocean mirrors the sky? While I looked at the gorgeous spectacle blazing above me, the great heart of France was red with the blood of her son, and from the circles of the German league there flashed the glare of cannon round the doomed but defiant city (GLL, 292).

And with this, the chapter ends.

"Where we compared, they were absurd; where we contrasted, they were monstrous" -- was the novelist of 1879 entirely without grounds for his satire on the English gentleman abroad? "He was an adept in the irony of incongruously grouping. . . . A word, a turn of the pen, or a word unsaid, offered the picture of him . . holding an English review of his Maker's grotesques." Meredith, it is safe to say, was not venting his satire on Butler as an individual. Rather, he was caricaturing a type, a stereotype even, a conventionally-defined pattern of responses and mannerisms which, through the tones and structures of prose style, inevitably succeed in creating the very character in whom they ostensibly originate. Whether or not the historical William Francis Butler was guilty of the "crashing condescension" which George Woodcock attributes to his view of the Métis, there can be no doubt that in the narratives of travel, and particularly in *The Great Lone Land*, it is the "English standard" that is being carried over the North-west and its people -- "English" as a term of cultural, not national, affiliation.[3]

In summary, then, what I wish to draw to the reader's particular notice is the clearly-marked correlation which exists between the persona of the narrator, his cultural position *vis à vis* the Northwest's residents, and the structural framework of the finished narrative of travel. In each of two, long, "solitary" journeys (at no point, in actual fact, did Butler travel alone), the narrator proceeds outward-bound into the wilderness towards a dramatic moment of meeting or recognition. In the first, and preparatory, journey, Butler is the Traveller as Soldier, straining towards a reunion with his revered commanding officer and thereby fulfilling a dangerous military assignment. After the meeting with Wolseley outside Fort Francis, the pace of the narrative sags noticeably for a space, the Force's entry into Fort Garry forming a distinct anti-climax. This momentary relaxation is but a breathing-space, however, as Butler prepares to describe the assignment which, although not entering the narrative until more than half-way through the book, is the one which the majority of Butler's readers would probably identify as forming far and away the more memorable part of *The Great Lone Land*.

This is the journey in winter from Fort Garry to Rocky Mountain House and back -- "that chill, solitary trek across the white face of the new Canada," in Pierre Berton's words -- and this journey, too, has its moment of climax. Here, however, the drama lies not in the meeting between commander and subordinate, but in the sudden realization by Butler, the proven Northwest Traveller, of the aesthetic and moral sublimity that is in Nature. The moment of recognition comes mid-way through Chapter XVII when, after twelve hundred miles of travel through the plains and parkland terrain, the narrator first glimpses the Rocky Mountains. Here, for the first time in the narrative, occurs the phrase (complete with capital letters) to which Butler has been building up for the better part of three hundred pages:

> Then, looking west, I beheld the great range in unclouded glory. The snow had cleared the atmosphere, the sky was coldly bright. An immense plain stretched from my feet to the mountain -- a plain so vast that every object of hill and wood and lake lay dwarfed into one continuous level, and at the back of this level, beyond the pines and the lakes and the river-courses, rose the giant range, solid, impassable, silent -- a mighty barrier rising midst an immense land, standing sentinel over the plains and prairies of America, over the measureless solitudes of this Great Lone Land (GLL, 274-5).

V

THAT PICTURE WHICH MEMORY SEES

"There are," Butler wrote in the early pages of The Great Lone Land, "many landscapes which can never be painted, photographed, or described, but which the mind carries away instinctively to look at again and again in aftertime -- these are the celebrated views of the world, and they are not easy to find" (GLL, 29). We may question whether Butler meant this statement to be taken literally: such views are, after all, painted and (now, undoubtedly, more than in Butler's time) photographed with regularity and ease. As for their being described, it was generally acknowledged to be the business of the travel-writer to offer to his stay-at-home readers descriptions of those of the world's celebrated views which it had been his good fortune to reach, see, and remember. Yet the burden of his assertion is clear enough: that no representation, whether on canvas, or on film, or by means of verbal formulation, can satisfactorily convey the complex personal responses of a highly-trained sensibility to the original sensory, emotional and intellectual experience of "viewing" the view.

It is "the charm of descriptive diction, which gives special value to Sir William Butler's travel books," wrote one commentator in 1911.[1] One could hardly expect to find a more straightforward statement of literary value than that. And since Butler's powers of landscape description in particular have been (as I have noted) especially recommended to Canadians, on the combined authority of William Grant, Edward McCourt, and Pierre Berton, it cannot be out of place for the Canadian literary historian to examine in some detail the rhetorical bases of Butler's descriptive prose, and to evaluate the results. It is such examination, and such evaluation, which I propose to accomplish in the present chapter.

Like many another writer of descriptive prose before and since, Butler on occasion protested his inability to do justice to his materials. "To tell the mere work of each day is no difficult matter," he wrote. "But how shall I attempt to fill in the details of scene and circumstance between these rough outlines of time and toil, for almost at every hour of the long summer day the great Winnipeg revealed some new phase of beauty and of peril, some changing scene of lonely grandeur?" (GLL, 146-7). This passage occurs at the beginning of Butler's account of his wilderness travels, and undoubtedly expressed a very real perplexity in the writer's mind at that point: how indeed to impart to his readers, through the medium of words, not simply the phenomenological qualities of his surroundings, but their cultural implications as well: the "mental property" which the sensitive and articulate observer might fittingly derive from travel in the wilds of North America.

In the episode which gives rise to this query, Butler rises to the occasion, as he does to so many others, with energy, courage and decision. He sets immediately to work to offer specific details of scene and circumstance: the Winnipeg River makes a descent of 360 feet in the course of 160 miles, Silver Falls has an ascent of 22 feet, and the Seven Portages "a total rise of sixty feet in a distance of three miles" (GLL, 147). Here Butler pauses for a moment, to observe parenthetically, "How cold does the bare narration of these facts appear beside their actual realization in a small canoe manned by Indians!"; but then he plunges again into the task at hand, producing a very readable account of ascending a representative rapid in the Winnipeg, prefaced by this self-adjuration, "Let us see if we can picture one of these many scenes." In considering the general problem of Butler's response to the challenge he has posed to himself -- "Let us see if we can picture one of these many scenes" -- it is important for the reader to be aware that "picture" is a key word in Butler's lexicon, a synonym for "describe" which carries with it a number of related assumptions about the nature and function of language as a means of communication.

It is by now hardly original to remark on the difficulties which the natural environment of this continent has traditionally presented to European-trained writers of descriptive prose, whose recorded perceptions of landscape tend unavoidably to reflect the aesthetic standards, and resources of vocabulary, of a sophisticated but non-indigenous culture. So widely recognized is this principle of North American literary criticism that one need hardly multiply instances. In lieu, therefore, of a detailed history of descriptive prose on the prairies prior to 1870, I propose to offer here only a few brief observations on the practice of one of Butler's predecessors in the field, by way of general introduction to the literary problem at issue. I refer to Robert Michael Ballantyne, whose Hudson's Bay, or, Every-day Life in the Wilds of North America was published in 1848.

Like Butler, Ballantyne began by assuming that total ignorance of his subject prevailed among his British readers, although his statement of this assumption shows Ballantyne to have been the more ingenuous of the two:

> Reader, -- I take it for granted that you are tolerably well acquainted with the different modes of life and travelling peculiar to European nations. I also presume that you know something of the inhabitants of the East; and, it may be, a good deal of the Americans in general. But I suspect, at least I would fain hope, that you have only a vague and indefinite knowledge of life in those wild, uncivilised regions in the northern continent of America, around the shores of Hudson's Bay. I would fain hope this, I say, that I may have the satisfaction of giving you information on the subject.[2]

No less ingenuously, Ballantyne appeals for the reader's active co-operation in laying the groundwork for his narrative of life as a fur-trader:

> Reader, you will materially assist me in my description, if you will endeavour to draw the following landscape on the retina of your mind's eye.
>
> Imagine an immense extent of country, many hundred miles broad, and many hundred miles long, covered with dense forests, expanded lakes, broad rivers, and mighty mountains; and all in a state of primeval simplicity -- undefaced by the axe of civilised man, and untenanted by aught save a few roving hordes of Red Indians, and myriads of wild animals.

This description, being imprinted "on the retina of your mind's eye," will, Ballantyne claims, serve as "a pretty correct idea of the

Hudson's Bay Company's territories" in North America, one adequate at least to function as a backdrop for the more-detailed (and, Ballantyne hopes, "graphic") descriptions to follow of individual trading posts and routes of travel.[3]

Besides having to work at the most elementary level of public education, however, Ballantyne had other problems as a writer. He points to one of them when he acknowledges the uncommon demands which the Northwest setting makes on the writer from across the Atlantic, complaining that a cliché of descriptive prose suddenly reveals unsuspected limitations:

> Often has nature been described as falling asleep in the arms of winter, and awakening at the touch of spring; but nowhere is this simile so strikingly illustrated as in these hyperborean climes, where, for eight long silent months, nature falls into a sleep so still and unbroken that death seems to be a fitter simile than sleep; and in spring she bursts into a life so bright, so joyous, so teeming with animal and vegetable life, and especially when contrasted with her previous slumber, so noisy, that awakening from sleep does not give anything like an adequate idea of the change, and bursting into life, even, falls short of the bright reality.[4]

Ballantyne's duties with the Hudson's Bay Company never permitted him to travel farther west into the interior than a half-day's canter into the prairies outside Fort Garry; and in his published account he made no secret of the fact that what he did see of the scenery there did not impress him much. "The situation [of the Fort] is pretty and quiet," he wrote, "but there is too much flatness in the surrounding country for the lover of the grand and picturesque."[5] Ballantyne much preferred the Rainy River district east of Red River, making quite explicit the grounds on which he has formulated his judgments of beauty in landscape:

> Next morning we commenced the ascent of Lac la Pluie River. This is decidedly the *most beautiful* river we had yet traversed, not only on account of the luxuriant foliage, of every hue, with which its noble banks are covered, but *chiefly from the resemblance it bears in many places to the scenery of England*, recalling to mind the grassy lawns and verdant banks of Britain's streams, and transporting the beholder from the wild scenes of the western world to his native home (italics mine).[6]

Unsurprisingly, then, Ballantyne could find little to say about the surroundings of Red River that was anything more ambitious than this: "Red River settlement is, to use a high-flown expression, an oasis in the desert; and may be likened to a spot upon the moon, or a solitary ship upon the ocean. In plain English, it is an isolated settlement on the borders of one of the vast prairies of North America."[7]

In the case of Ballantyne, who has never approached Butler's high repute as a stylist, we may perhaps be the less likely to contest this note of scepticism in reference to high-flown expressions. The plain English of "an isolated settlement on the borders of one of the vast prairies of North America" will do very nicely. To Butler's mind, however, metaphor and simile were tools of the trade. "Description depends so much on comparison," he wrote, adding, "and comparison necessitates a something like" (*GLL*, 25). The initial problem which Butler faced was that, as with Niagara, the landscape of the western interior appeared to suffer from an absence of 'a something like'. And the second problem was the continued ignorance of the English reader, twenty-five years after the publication of Ballantyne's Hudson's Bay, of the geography of the region itself. How, then, was he to construct a picture for the mind's eye, for readers who knew nothing at first hand of North America's characteristic physiography?

That physiography had first impressed itself on Butler's mind in the summer of 1867 when, in company with his regiment, he entered his "new scene of service" in Canada. Butler recorded in his autobiography:

> The approach by the mighty estuary of the St. Lawrence River, the gradual drawing in of these great shores, the immense width of the stream when it is still six hundred miles from the open sea, the varied scenery of lake and rapid along the upward course to Ontario, and then that beautiful expanse of water itself, all combined to strike the mind of the newcomer with the sense of size and majesty which is the dominant note of the American continent.[8]

And it is also "the American continent" as a whole, rather than any of its political components, that Butler has in mind during the early chapters of The Great Lone Land. In Chapter II the narrator (self-characterized for the occasion as "one whose home is the broad earth itself") pauses for a moment to muse on the idea of America. The subject has been started by "the first glimpse of land rising out of the waste of ocean," a glimpse, so we are told, which "has the power of localizing an idea, the very vastness of which prevents its realization on shore." Butler continues:

> Behind that strip of blue coast lies a world, and that world the new one. Far away inland lie scattered many landscapes glorious with mountain, lake, river and forest, all unseen, all unknown to the wanderer who for the first time seeks the American shore; yet instinctively their presence is felt in that faint outline of sea-lapped coast which lifts itself above the ocean; and even if in

> after-time it becomes the lot of the wanderer, as it became my lot, to look again upon these mountain summits, these immense inland seas, these mighty rivers whose waters seek their mother ocean through 3000 miles of meadow, in none of these glorious parts, vast though they may be, will the sense of the still vaster whole be realized as strongly as in that first glimpse of land showing dimly over the western horizon of the Atlantic (GLL, 18).

In this passage, with its emphasis on "size and majesty" indeed -- "glorious," "immense," "mighty," "vast," "still vaster" -- Butler momentarily lends himself to the suspicion that he is here paying deference to what was, by the time of writing of his travel book, something of an established literary convention in treating the landscapes of the New World for publication. In particular, it was the habit of an entire generation of American literary nationalists during the 1840's, '50's and '60's to expatiate on America's unique opportunity to found a "great" national literature on the "greatness" of her terrain. The grandeur of America's topography alone, these writers argued, must inevitably rouse the nation's citizens to memorable expression in prose and poetry. A good many transatlantic visitors took pains to ridicule the naiveté of this view, but to little avail. As we know, Butler himself was prepared to grant the considerable impressiveness of the North American landscape, considered in terms of sheer lavishness of scale; thus as late as 1910 he was still pointing to "size and majesty" as "the dominant note of the American continent." In the travel book of 1872, however, he seems to have felt it incumbent upon him to hold up the (British) side when it came to investing the element of size with the frequently (and illegitimately, in British eyes) associated idea of worth.

Some such reservation, at least, must be assumed to lie behind Butler's somewhat equivocal defense, in the preface to The Great Lone Land, of the phrase which he had chosen as the title for his book. Evidently feeling (with what provocation he does not reveal) that the phrase lay open to objection, Butler justified his choice in these terms:

> The "Great Lone Land" is no sensational name. The North-west fulfils, at the present time, every essential of that title. There is no other portion of the globe in which travel is possible where loneliness can be said to live so thoroughly. One may wander 500 miles in a direct line without seeing a human being, or an animal larger than a wolf. And if vastness of plain, and magnitude of lake, mountain and river can mark a land as great, then no region possesses higher claims to that distinction (GLL, xv).

"If . . . magnitude . . . can mark a land as great:" by means of this "if," Butler establishes his priorities in treating the two "essentials" of his title, greatness and loneness. Greatness, as British visitors to America kept reminding their hosts, was after all an ambiguous concept, one in which magnitude of dimension might very well tempt the unwary enthusiast into imputing quality or value. Loneness, on the other hand, fitted much more readily into Butler's purposes here. In the concept of solitude, he discerned a condition of existence in which a certain range of cultural preoccupations could be absorbed into what a British critic of our generation, Raymond Williams, has usefully termed "a structure of feeling."[9] Using the related concepts of separation and contrast, Butler was enabled to cast his narrative of travel into the mould of philosophical enquiry into civilization as a whole. What emerges, however, is one man's enquiry into his personal relations with the particular social entity which, as Butler says, "one word alone can picture, that one word in which so many others centre -- Home" (GLL, 257).

What part "Home" played in conditioning Butler's treatment of the west in The Great Lone Land can perhaps be suggested to the reader by one further reference to Butler's preface. In the preface, it will be recalled, Butler gave notice to his readers that he would not defend at length "peculiarities of language or opinion which may hereafter make themselves apparent to the reader," a comment followed by this statement of renunciation: "Let it be. In the solitudes of the Great Lone Land, whither I am once more about to turn my steps, the trifles that spring from such disappointment will cease to trouble." The historical William Francis Butler may well have advanced this sentiment in all sincerity. I would suggest, however, that the possibility of his having thrown himself into the rôle of disappointed idealist turning his back on a society riddled with imperfection ought not to prevent our recognizing it as a rôle, in its very unconventionality -- "peculiarity" -- one of the more familiar of the social and cultural conventions of mid-Victorian Britain.

My argument here, then, is that Butler's "opinions", despite his own ironic attribution of peculiarity to them, were not markedly peculiar for one of his education and aspirations, if we once take into account the facts of his character and experience -- his social and professional ambition, his undoubted intelligence, sensitivity and self-consciousness -- which contributed to shape the idiosyncratic blend of ideas and attitudes current in the Victorian cultural milieu apparent in The Great Lone Land. And I would further argue that what is true of the opinions in this book is correspondingly true of its language: "language" meaning not simply the emphatic terms in which the narrator frames his opinions, but with reference as well to the rhetorical and epistemological assumptions implicit in certain characteristic aspects of his prose. Which brings me back (finally) to Edward McCourt's claim that the words in which Butler describes the landscape of western Canada "often rise to the level of poetry." My question is this: if it could be demonstrated that it is in Butler's characteristic modes of language description that The Great Lone Land is most closely circumscribed by literary conventions which subsequent developments in philosophy and literature have seriously thrown in question, what is to prevent the critic from concluding that instead of rising, Butler's landscape description too often sinks under the rhetorical overload of a repetitive, generalized, and mannered prose?

In order to develop my reply to this question, I shall begin by asking the reader to consider once more the passage, quoted above on page 92, in which Butler as narrator explained at some length the workings of what (to coin a phrase) we might call "geographical synechdoche:" the apprehension of the whole continent by virtue of having seen one of its parts. From this, so the passage maintains, arises the unfailing interest for even the most blase world traveller of the first glimpse of land after an ocean voyage. Assuming (as literate Britons of the time were prone to do) that the traveller finds his end and object in the aesthetic satisfaction to be derived from the contemplation of beauty in landscape, the narrator then goes on to suggest that the composite landscapes of America constitute the idea of America -- an idea which, as he goes on to assert, exists like some Jungian archetype in the human psyche. For it is explicitly stated in this passage that even the first-time visitor to America instinctively feels the presence of these landscapes when approaching the shores of North America. This, surely, is a statement of epistemological processes which partakes of popular Victorian Romanticism at its most uncritical level. Surely, too, we are able to find a more likely explanation for this particular traveller's emotion in Butler's own autobiographical writing, when he describes his search for the veritable realities behind his boyhood reading of Cooper's fiction -- the realities of Indians, wild animals, and "the mystic word 'prairie'."

No less germane to my point is Butler's technique, in this same passage, of grounding his landscape description in the simple naming of the elements which make up the typical North American landscape. On this occasion, it is true, the mystic word "prairie" finds a variant form, in "meadows." All the topographical features which he mentions in this paragraph, however, form a list very familiar to the reader closely acquainted with Butler's travel books. To the apparently no less mystic words "mountain," "lake," "river," and "forest," he will add a restricted number of others as occasion warrants -- "hill" and "valley," "plain" and "desert," "rapid," "rock" and "stream." In this list, with all its varying combinations and permutations, Butler found a basic vocabulary for the articulate traveller in America, a kind of all-purpose kit of topographical components resonant with meaning for the trained imagination.

So, for example, on page 29 Butler uses "plain, river, lake and mountain" to "picture" the landscape of Quebec in spring; and the region north and west of Lake Superior is described, accurately but hardly with striking originality of phrasing, as "hundreds of miles of quiet-lying lake, of wildly-rushing river, of rock-broken rapid, of foaming cataract," each element coming complete with its appropriate modifier (GLL, 36). Furthermore, apropos the subject of adjectives -- do forests always have to be trackless, meadows measureless, and solitudes tenantless? Butler thought so, and I can find no record of any of his readers ever having objected. Perhaps, however, it is only the purist who would point out that solitudes are by definition tenantless; and only a Canadian purist who would remark that we in this country tend to take for granted that rapids consist of water broken by rocks, and that cataracts foam. Yet it is on the basis of details such as this that I would suggest that the reader in Canada might profitably begin to question whether we are dealing here with evidences of a mature and original prose style, one which invites commendation from the critic of "our literature."

The legitimacy of rhetorical gambits such as these may well have been self-evident to Butler's original generation of readers, brought up on the theory and practice of the early nineteenth century British poets and their Victorian successors. Nor is there much point in taking Butler to task for having resorted to descriptive techniques displayed in the work of the major literary figures of his time. Certainly the reader of The Great Lone Land must salute the dramatic fitness of Butler's choice of epigraph for his title page, from Tennyson's "The Palace of Art":

> A full fed river winding slow,
> By herds upon an endless plain.
> . . . .
> And some one pacing there alone
> Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
> Lit with a low, large moon.

Even more revealing, perhaps, as providing dispensation for the kind of landscape description practised in Butler's books is the quotation which Butler later chose for the title page of Far Out: Rovings Retold:

> -- Far wide expand
> Beneath the wan stars and descending moon,
> Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
> Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
> Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
> Mingling their flames with twilight on the verge
> Of the remote horizon.

This quotation comes from Shelley's Alastor: Or, The Spirit of Solitude (ll. 553-9), a poem which, according to Shelley's own Preface, represents the Poet,

> a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and the beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions.

With what degree of seriousness Butler may have taken this interesting individual as a paradigm of his own situation and feelings is not the point at issue. What we are obliged to concede, however, from certain details of rhetoric -- the listing of discrete natural phenomena, each with its single modifier, and the diction and syntax of phrases such as "dim tracts and vast," "the verge of the remote horizon" -- is that Shelley exerted considerable influence on Butler's notion of "poetic" prose.

To advance, on Butler's own suggestion, specific literary models for the exercise of a mode of landscape description in prose, is not to deny a strong element of personal response in Butler's treatment of the terrain of western Canada. The Northwest of Butler's travels was undoubtedly very real to his perceptions, and his progressive notations of the changing nature of the country as he travelled have prompted John Warkentin, the historian of geographical record in western Canada, to characterize Butler as "soldier, traveller and acute topographical observer."[10] We may thus infer from Warkentin's appraisal that in terms of the publishing history of the prairies, a degree of permanent documentary value accrues to Butler's descriptions of the interior topography. But the literary historian must nonetheless insist that Butler was no more topographer than he was ethnologist; that, as with his treatment of the Indians, the requirements of the narrative persona were the controlling factors in the landscape description offered in Butler's book.

In fact, there are striking analogies between Butler's handling of The Poor Red Man of the Northwest, and of the solitudes which are the Indians' natural habitat. Just as The Great Lone Land stands as Butler's literary record of the Indians' inevitable fate, what I have earlier identified as an elegy for a dying race, so too is this book an elegy for the Romantic sensibility, a sensibility stimulated to response and expression by a conviction of personal communion with Nature, spelled with a capital N. For the Northwest as geography, as property, was not foremost in Butler's mind; rather, his concern, as I have mentioned before, was with mental property, and what appealed to him most about the topography of the Northwest was its suggestiveness to the mind which, seeing in the fact-changing civilization of his time only frenzy and decay, treasured the discovery of the simplicity and apparent changelessness of the landscape there. Frustrated by the multitudinousness and decadence of modern civilization, Butler was intent on showing that in "the North-west . . . at the present time," the percipient traveller could still find images of eternity. Consequently, Butler set out to represent the terrain of Western Canada as a kind of topographical poem, a patterned structure of Titanic proportions in which a litany of natural phenomena -- river, forest, mountain and plain -- served to represent the graphic means by which Nature communicates her secrets to him who will stop to read her message. But the changelessness is apparent only; that is, the same intrusive elements which guarantee the demise of the Indian will soon convert these "tenantless solitudes" to useful account, and thereby render them obnoxious to the refugee from modern industrial democracy and all its concomitant institutions and representative human types.

It is in The Wild North Land rather than The Great Lone Land that Butler makes most explicit the connection between the Romantic wanderer, and his recompense in undefiled Nature; and it is appropriate that this should be so, for it is in the later-published book that Butler is describing a journey which, in its aimlessness and self-derived motivation, is even more in tune with the persona he has developed than was the officially-commissioned journey, along a prescribed and historic route, which provided the basis for his first book of travels. In The Wild North Land, the narrative persona is still that of the disappointed and unjustly slighted military man; but with this difference, that he is secure in the knowledge that, by virtue of his previous journey through the wilds, he has earned "the simple encomium one often utters in the north, 'He is a good traveller'" (WNL, 112). So the frustrated servant of the state turns for solace to the regions where the state has not yet made its mark:

> But when there was also present to the memory of one who thus regarded the new order of military life, the great solitudes, the inland oceans, the desolate wilds, the gloomy forests of a far-away land, through which his former wanderings had carried him; when thought re-sought again those vast regions of the earth where Nature has graven her image in characters so colossal, that man seems to move slowly amidst an ocean frozen rigid by lapse of time, frozen into those things we name mountains, rivers, prairies, forest; man a mere speck, powerless so far to mark his presence, in blur of smoke, in noise of city, in clash of crank, or whirl of wheel; when these things came back in pictures touched by the soft colours Memory loves to limn with, there were not wanting dull professional outlooks and dearth of service to turn the footsteps gladly into the old regions again (WNL, 3-4).

"These vast regions of the earth where Nature has graven her image in characters so colossal:" it is intriguing to realize that Butler has here used the word "characters" in its sense of "written symbol," topography as typography. That Nature can impart concepts to man through the agency of physiographical formations, as one would engrave written messages on a stone tablet, was of course another notion associated with certain branches of Romantic literature, the universe being assumed to be both mystic and animistic at one and the same time. Regarding Nature's animism, Butler at times purports to maintain some scepticism. On page 22 of The Wild North Land, for example, he writes, "The rigid features of the wilderness rest unchanged. Lonely, silent, and impassive, heedless of man, season, or time, the weight of the infinite seems to brood over it." Yet the sentences which follow make significant and entirely characteristic qualification:

> Once only in the hours of day and night a moment comes when this impassive veil is drawn from its feature, and the eye of the wanderer catches a glimpse of the sunken soul of the wilderness; it is the moment which follows sunset. . . . It may be only a fancy, a conceit bred from loneliness and long wandering, but at such times the great solitude has seemed to me to open its soul, and that in its depths I read its secrets.

The concession that "it may be only a fancy, a conceit bred from loneliness and long wandering" is a gracious one, but it is also one which contains within itself the grounds for its virtually automatic cancellation by the sympathetic reader; few readers of Butler's time, at least, would have wanted to deny to the speaker of these reflections, his right to claim initiation into one of the publicly honoured rites of the age, communion with the soul of the wilderness.

It is no less intriguing to realize that Butler is prepared to take the "conceit" (to use his own word) of Nature's typography to its logical conclusion. For, just as the rigid features of geographical formation are the visible and comprehensible manifestations of Nature's mysterious presence -- the images of her otherwise incommunicable reality -- so words, Butler contends, are communication at second hand, clothing for the images; and stiff, unwieldly clothing at that:

> Not more wooden than the ark animals of our childhood, are the words in which man would clothe the images of that higher nature which the Almighty has graven into the shapes of lonely mountains. . . . All this boundless range of river and plain, ridge and prairie, rocky precipice and snow-capped sierra, is as much above my poor power of words, as He who built this mighty nature is higher still than all (WNL, 244-5).

Yet a later passage from the same book reminds the reader that it is not landscape per se -- the mere presence and arrangement of Nature's features -- which provides the most rewarding, if also at the same time the most recalcitrant, subject for the narrator. Landscape as phenomenon can be made to find some degree of expression in words, however wooden. Rather, what particularly absorbs his mind and feelings is the "vision", the remembered associations of emotional and intellectual stimulation with a geographically-locatable terrain; and this vision must, regrettably, remain the private possession of the observer:

> Buffalo hunts on horseback or on foot have frequently been the theme of travellers' story. . . . Who has not seen in pencil sketch or pen story the image of the huge, shaggy beast careering madly before an eagle-feathered red man, whose horse decked like its rider

> with the feathered trophy, launches himself swiftly over the prairie? . . . All these have found record from pen and pencil; but I very much doubt me if it is possible to place before a reader's mental vision anything like a true picture of the sense of solitude, of endless space, of awful desolation which at times comes to the traveller's mind as he looks over some vast prairie and beholds a lonely herd of bisons trailing slowly across the snow-wrapt, endless expanse, into the shadows of the coming night. . . . No book has told the story, no picture has caught the colouring of sky and plain. . . ; but all the same the vision returns without one effort of remembrance: the vast plain snow-wrapt the west ablaze with gold, and green, and saffron (WNL, 57-9).

Thus does the literal vision -- the sensory apprehension of a landscape in time and space -- become transmuted into the "vision" of imagination, taking up permanent residence in the storage vaults of memory. Each vision has its value: from the first vision, Butler tells us, "the wanderer draws the recompense of his toil;" while from the second he "reaps in aftertime the harvest of his hardship" (WNL, 59). Between the two, however, Butler seems to have been prepared from the outset to treasure harvest over recompense; to anticipate, that is, the pleasures of nostalgia.

We know this to be so, because the narrator of The Great Lone Land was also one who liked to store up gems for Memory's vaults. "Happy, happy days were these," Butler wrote, "-- days the memory of which goes far into the future, growing brighter as we journey farther away from them" (GLL, 150). Growing brighter -- but at the same time growing more simplified in content and blurred in outline, becoming with the passage of time the dream in Butler's mind -- "a great golden mist, a big river flowing from it, a dark herd of buffaloes slowly moving across the prairie distance" -- in brief, a dream-landscape, gigantic and vague, drawn in "the soft colours

Memory loves to limn with," and calcified, by Memory, into verbal symbols that even more surely than the face of the land will resist the assaults of historical process.

What is the relation of this private (and highly privileged) aesthetic possession to the dominant thematic concerns of The Great Lone Land -- the tragic story of the Indians, the insistent definitions of savagery and civilization, the clear-cut characterizing of travellers and pioneers? Butler ties all the threads together in the last two pages of the book, when he recounts his feelings on having returned to "the ridge to the south of Lake Manitoba, fifty miles from Fort Garry," the eastward line of demarcation between wilderness and civilization in the Canadian west of 1871:

> Now the unnumbered scenes of nigh 3000 miles of travel were spread out in that picture which memory sees in the embers of slow-burning fires, when the night-wind speaks in dreamy tones to the willow branches and waving grasses. And if there be those among my readers who can ill comprehend such feelings, seeing only in this return the escape from savagery to civilization -- from the Wild Indian to the Anglo-American, from the life of toil and hardship to that of rest and comfort -- then words would be useless to throw light upon the matter, or to better enable such men to understand that it was possible to look back with keen regret to the wild days of the forest and the prairie (GLL, 349).

Words, then, are an aid to communication among kindred spirits -- specifically, among those who are willing to share the narrator's resistance to the uniformity and stasis of settled communities, those for whom civilization is first a mould, then a cage, then a prison (GLL, 350). The Indians of old Canada are numbered among these "prisoners of our civilization;" but there are others:

> He who has once tasted the unworded freedom of the Western wilds must ever feel a sense of constraint within the boundaries of civilized life. The Russian is not the only man who has the Tartar close underneath his skin. That Indian idea of the earth being free to all men catches quick and lasting hold of the imagination -- the mind widens out to grasp the reality of the lone space and cannot shrink again to suit the requirements of fenced divisions. There is a strange fascination in the idea, "Wheresoever my horse wanders there is my home," stronger perhaps is that thought than any allurement of wealth, or power, or possession given us by life. Nor can after-time ever wholly remove it; midst the smoke and hum of cities, midst the prayer of churches, in street or salon, it needs but little cause to recall again to the wanderer the image of the immense meadows where, far away at the portals of the setting sun, lies the Great Lone Land (GLL, 350).

In this passage, where Indians, unworded freedom, and the power which the reality of the lone space exercises over the imagination, meet in the plenitude of mental property comprised in Butler's memorable title phrase, the Great Lone Land, we recognize a summary statement of much that has gone before. For it was, after all, in the very matter of language that the narrator of this book had grounded his attribution of cultural uniqueness to the Indian of North America:

> Why do I call this wild child the great anomaly of the human race? I will tell you. Alone amongst savage tribes he has learnt the lesson which the great mother Nature teaches to her sons through the voices of the night, the forest, and the solitude. This river, this mountain, this measureless meadow speak to him in a language of their own. Dwelling with them, he learns their varied tongues, and his speech becomes an echo of the beauty that lies spread around him. Every name for lake or river, for mountain or meadow, has its peculiar significance, and to tell the Indian title of such things is generally to tell the nature of them also. Ossian never spoke with the voice of the mist-shrouded mountains or the wave-beat shores of the isles more thoroughly than does this chief of the Blackfeet or the Sioux speak the voices of the things of the earth and air amidst which his wild life is cast (GLL, 243).

Butler, of course, did not speak Blackfoot or Sioux; but he had read Irving, Cooper, and Longfellow, who had "found in the rich store of Indian poetry the source of their choicest thought" (GLL, 244). And, too, he had read Ossian, Shelley, Tennyson and Parkman, bright spirits all.

Like theirs, Butler's definition of the imagination is thus essentially that process of mind by which prisoners of civilization the world over, whether they be Arabs, Tartars, Khirgis, Indians, or Irish soldiers with literary aspirations, intuit complex and extended ranges of intellectual significance through that limited selection of words -- themselves stylized arrangements of typographical characters on the printed page -- which denote the presence of their counterparts in nature, the no-less-stylized arrangement of topographical characters into landscapes for the mental vision. Among initiates, the concept of freedom can perhaps remain unworded; but if it must have a word, "prairie" says it all. Moreover, in parallel fashion, the traveller need only allude to the possession of his aesthetic recompense, in what Butler variously calls "sight," "view," "vision," "image" or (most frequently of all) "picture" -- "that picture which memory sees" -- in order to conjure up appropriate responses from those among his readers who, if only for the duration of their reading of the book, acquiesce in his invitation to join him in his rôle as civilization's prisoner.

VI

CIVIL LAW AND GOSPEL LIGHT

In the historical moment of The Great Lone Land's publication, prisoners of civilization apparently numbered in the thousands. So popular was Butler's book with the British reading public that a second printing was called for within weeks, and Butler became (albeit in absentia) something of a celebrity in London.[1] The vast majority of Butler's readers, no doubt, were content to escape their prison vicariously, through the pages of his narrative. Yet some few were stirred by what they read to throw in their little lot with the movement westward. There was, for example, the Montreal stockbroker described by Nellie McClung in Clearing in the West who, "having read Butler's 'The Great Lone Land,' . . . began to think of making the venture of coming west." Like the Mooney family, the stockbroker emigrated to Manitoba in the summer of 1880, taking up a homestead and turning farmer.[2] Then, too, there were the young men who encountered Butler's book, perhaps during adolescence, and subsequently found their way into the North West Mounted Police, the force whose formation Lieutenant Butler had recommended in his report to the Canadian government.

How many of its early members the N.W.M.P. owed to Butler we will never know; but three of them, at least, put into the published record their admiration for The Great Lone Land. In Trooper and Redskin in the Far North-West: Recollections of Life in the North-West Mounted Police, Canada, 1884-1888 (published in London in 1889 by the same firm which had issued Butler's book), John G. Donkin wrote, "From the 49th parallel of latitude to the great sub-Arctic forest on the left bank of the North Saskatchewan, ranges a terra incognita only cut by the ribbon-like line of settlement along the track of the C. P. R. . . . I do not think that any one, since Butler wrote his 'Great Lone Land,' has thrown light on the hidden phases of existence in this vast abode of desolation."[3] A second ex-trooper of British origin who found material for publication in his experiences with the Police was John Mackie, author of half a dozen books of fiction (among them, Sinners Twain: A Romance of The Great Lone Land, 1895) in which Butler's poetic title and poetic landscape descriptions alike found frequent employment. And the third was Sam Steele, a native of Ontario who discovered the appeal of the Northwest while serving with the Expeditionary Force of 1870.

Steele was present at the installation of A. G. Archibald as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and the North West Territories on September 6, 1871. In Forty Years in Canada: Reminiscences of the Great North-West (1915), he recorded that at the ceremony, "Lieutenant Butler and Dr. Schultz arrived together, both remarkable for their magnificent physique and almost gigantic stature as well as for the contrast they afforded, Butler being dark-haired and bearded, Schultz golden-haired like a Viking of old."[4] In a later chapter, Steele accounted in the following manner for his decision to join the mounted police force at the time of its inception:

> In August [1873] at Ottawa I learnt that the North West Mounted Police Force was to be raised and sent to the north west very soon. Colonel French . . . gave four others and myself permission to leave the battery and join the police. . . . Our messes gave us a jolly send-off. I was sorry to leave, for I had been very well treated by all ranks, and I liked the work, but there were no prospects, and I had the Great Lone Land before me, where it is a man's own fault if he fails while he has health and strength.[5]

It happens that none of these three men, Donkin, Mackie or Steele, became permanent residents of the Northwest, although many ex-troopers did choose to settle in the region when their term of duty expired. Perhaps Mackie and Steele shared Donkin's distaste for the occupations of the agriculturalist.

> I had experienced quite enough of clod-breaking [Donkin wrote, after a trial period as a hand on a Manitoba farm]. I had "broken" thirteen acres of virgin prairie with a team of curse-compelling oxen (a newly coined Homeric epithet); I had harrowed and rolled, I had planted potatoes, and made hay; I had hoed wild buckwheat till my spine was bent; and had voted it a fraud. It was "not my forte," I was not cut out for a horny handed husbandman, and having made up my mind to take a turn at soldiering again, I went down to Winnipeg [to the recruiting station of the N. W. M. P.] to try my luck.[6]

These amusing recollections notwithstanding, however, it is important for the study of western Canada's literary history to stress that, for every one of Donkin's persuasion among Butler's first generation of readers, there were hundreds of others who read The Great Lone Land from precisely the vantage-point which Donkin voted a fraud: that of the husbandman, horny handed or otherwise. Farmers either by profession or by aspiration, what these readers wanted to know, prosaic as it may sound, was whether the Northwest held out reasonable prospects of success for a life on the land. As a rule, these were readers who did not think of themselves as prisoners of civilization. Rather, they were its hopeful beneficiaries: hard-working, self-denying, literal-minded individuals, often heads of families, whose rising expectations in the way of material and cultural provision governed not only their ambitions on their own behalf, but their hopes for their children as well. Instead of prison, mould, or cage, the concept of civilization represented in their minds a bulwark and a goal, a measure of their individual and collective achievement in life.

Taken in their thousands, prospective emigrants of this kind made up what Butler had called in his report "the immense wave of human life which rolls unceasingly from Europe to America"; they were the ambitious multitudes of lower and lower-middle class origins -- "the pushful and the determined," as one turn-of-the-century journalist described them -- who were drawn to this continent by the twin lures of financial advancement and social mobility offered by the ownership of producing land.[7] Nor, of course, did emigrants to western Canada come only from Europe. In North America itself, the pressure of increasing population on the supply of prime agricultural land created expansionist sentiment throughout the continent. By the time of the Transfer of Rupert's Land to the Dominion government, the time was ripe on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel for the agricultural frontier of North America to move north as well as west.

One major barrier to its northward movement, however, was the sheer dearth of reliable information on the region's capability for agricultural settlement. The territory involved was so immense, the variations of climate and terrain so great, and the Hudson's Bay Company so jealous a guardian of its domain, that it would be another thirty years before the Dominion government's 1870 gamble in territorial expansion could be known conclusively to have been a legitimate one. Such knowledge had to await the combined investigations of an entire generation of surveyors, scientists, and actual farmers on the land. In the meantime, publications about the Northwest proliferated, the bulk of them highly speculative in nature. Controversies over, for example, the accuracy of H. Y. Hind's propaganda coinage, "the Fertile Belt," "with all its persuasive implications for settlement," as John Warkentin reminds us, occupied the generation of the 1860's and '70's.[8] In lieu of hard facts, such public exchanges were bound to be conducted with more heat than light. While the controversy gathered momentum, however, in newspapers, pamphlets and books, immigration to the Northwest stood in visible need of direct stimulation. True, by the spring of 1872, several hundred farmers had arrived in Manitoba from eastern Canada, to test out reports they had heard (chiefly from the returning troops of Wolseley's force) of unlimited fertile land on the prairies. Yet thousands more remained at home, in hope and indecision, wanting more definite assurances than mere rumour that they would not be starved, or frozen, or scalped, were they to make the move to the unknown prairie west.

"There are, and can be, no Indian wars or difficulties in Manitoba. This is a matter of the utmost importance to the intending settler." And again, even more emphatically: "There are no Indian difficulties in our North-west."[9] Here speaks the voice of the historical moment: George Monro Grant, in another travel book of the period, Ocean to Ocean. Published in the spring of 1873, a scant year after the appearance of Butler's book, Ocean to Ocean was rushed through the presses in order to recall public-spirited (Conservative) Canadians, at the time absorbed in the unfolding drama of the Pacific Scandal, back to the larger, more urgent issue of western settlement. "To *construct* is 'the duty that lies nearest us,'" G. M. Grant wrote in the book's concluding chapter; "protected 'against infection and the hand of war' by the might of Britain, we have but to go forward, to open ~~up~~ for our children and the world what God has given into our possession, bind it together, consolidate it, and lay the foundations for an enduring future" (OTO, 364-5).

On July 16, 1872, the Sandford Fleming expedition, with G. M. Grant as recording secretary, left Toronto for Collingwood, where the steamer Francis Smith would take them on the first leg of their three-month journey to the Pacific coast. Their object was to provide a preliminary survey for the proposed transcontinental railway; their route, from Fort Garry to the mountains, would follow the Hudson's Bay Company trail. Guides would be engaged along the way, since none of the expedition's members had been over the ground before; but by way of general information about their projected route of travel through the interior, one of their number had the good fortune before leaving Toronto to pick up a copy of The Great Lone Land, published in Britain less than three months before. According to Pierre Berton, "all along the way, the travellers read and reread Butler's account of his journey."[10]

If, as Berton has correctly maintained, the years of the C.P.R.'s planning and construction were woven through with published allusions to The Great Lone Land, Ocean to Ocean helped to set the style. Grant refers to Butler, or to Butler's book, four times in the course of his narrative. One reference involves no more than a point of detail, as Grant corrects Butler and Palliser on the question of the true distance from Fort Garry to Fort Ellice (OTO, 105); while a second stands as a straightforward rhetorical substitution, in a manner which would soon become widely adopted, of "this 'Great Lone Land'" for "this region," "this territory," "this Northwest" (OTO, 114). Grant's usage here was simply a case of his meeting as best he could an awkward problem of nomenclature, "Rupert's Land" having been swept away by the Transfer: indeed, Grant's very point in this instance was that the Hudson's Bay Company was no longer "the only power in this 'Great Lone Land.'" The new name for the region, "Manitoba and the Northwest Territories," was cumbersome, while "the Northwest," although shorter, ran some risk of being misinterpreted, having been in common use for several decades to designate both the British territories of the interior, and the Pacific North West of the United States. Hence Grant's care, at several points in his narrative, to write of "our North-west." For writers concerned with the niceties of prose composition, therefore, Butler's poetic title filled an immediate practical need, and I think the point is worth making that it was partly on this account that "the Great Lone Land" so quickly achieved the status of a cliché. Not only was it poetic, it was useful.

Grant's use of the phrase on an early occasion in Ocean to Ocean, however, points to a rather more specialized significance in his mind for Butler's coinage. The occasion in question occurs when Grant tells of approaching the camping place at Rat Creek, Manitoba, on the second day out from Winnipeg. "The houses of several settlers were to be seen on different parts of the creek," Grant noted. "One of these was pointed out as the big house of Grant, a Nova Scotian, and now the farthest west settler. We were on the confines of the 'Great Lone Land'" (OTO, 81). Yet it was a usage which Grant did not repeat at any later point in his book. Instead, he relied on a more familiar phrase: the region where the Dominion government so far exerted only a nominal authority was, as far as Grant was concerned, No Man's Land (OTO, 109, 247).

Grant's fourth and last reference to Butler and his book is to be found in the polemical chapter with which Ocean to Ocean concludes. At the time of the allusion, Grant is engaged in a prolongued defense of engineers and surveyors as agents in the work of construction which he and the expedition's other members had so much at heart. The services of these men to their country, he argues here, have been insufficiently recognized, despite many personal sacrifices to the call of duty. In support of his argument he cites the example of the engineering party which had spent the better part of 1871 and 1872 on survey in the interior, only to learn on their return to Fort Garry that they were needed again immediately for a survey in the Rocky Mountains. Yet (so Grant tells the reader)

> the members of party M, notwithstanding what they had gone through, away from friends and the comforts of society, were ready to undertake a march of a thousand miles still farther away, in the dead of a Canadian winter.
>
> And what was the journey? They knew that it implied hardships such as Captain Butler encountered, and which he so graphically describes in "The Great Lone Land." They knew that it meant a great deal more. The journey over, they were only at the beginning of their work, and the work would be infinitely more trying than the journey itself (OTO, 360).

"The work would be infinitely more trying than the journey itself": so, I would suggest, Grant separates the men from the boys, the workers from the travellers, graphic descriptions of hardship notwithstanding. The same priorities, moreover, emerge in the introduction to Ocean to Ocean, where Grant explains how he intends to present his materials, and why he has chosen this form, and not some other:

> But those [Grant wrote] who had a right to speak in the matter said that the notes contained information that would be of interest to the general public, and of value to intending immigrants. They are therefore presented to the public, and are given just as they were written so that others might see, as far as possible, a photograph of what we saw and thought from day to day. A more readable book could have been made by omitting some things, coloring others, and grouping the whole; but as already explained, the object was not to make a book. The expedition . . . did not turn aside in search of adventures or of sport; and therefore an exciting narrative of hair-breadth escapes and thrilling descriptions of "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders" need scarcely be expected (OTO, 9).

In the light of Grant's pointed refusal here to "make a book" of his western travels, in the sense in which the making of books must have presented itself to his mind at that point in time, given his familiarity with Butler's exercise of essentially the same genre in The Great Lone Land, it is not difficult to discern in the form and presentation of Ocean to Ocean, a series of conscious choices on Grant's part, choices conditioned in large measure by fundamental differences between the audience Grant sought to reach, and the audience which was already turning Butler's book into a best-seller. For the purposes of vicarious travel and adventure, an image of immense meadows might indeed suffice. But for the intending settler, there must be verbal representation as close to photographic accuracy as the medium permitted.

From G. M. Grant's preference for photograph over picture springs the patient accumulation of detail which the reader of Ocean to Ocean encounters in passages such as the following, from chapter IV:

> August 4th -- . . . At 10 A.M., we went over to Grant's house to service. Mr. McDougal and a resident Wesleyan missionary officiated. About fifty people were present, and in the afternoon a Sunday school of thirty children was held in the same room. Some of us dined at Grant's, and the rest with one of his neighbours -- McKenzie. Both these men seem to be model settlers. They had done well in Ontario, but the spirit of enterprise had brought them to the new Province. One had come three years ago, and the other only last year; and now one had a hundred and twenty acres under wheat, barley and potatoes, and the other fifty. In five years both will have probably three or four hundred acres under the plough. There is no limit to the amount they may break up except the limit imposed by the lack of capital or their own moderation. This prairie land is the place for steam ploughs; reaping, mowing, and threshing machines. With such machinery one family can do the work of a dozen men. It is no wonder that these settlers speak enthusiastically of the country (OTO, 82).

To the prisoner of civilization, what could it matter that there were fifty people at the house of a settler named Grant, gathered for Methodist church services, on Sunday, August 4th, 1872? That the Sunday school attracted thirty children? Or that settlers who now had fifty or a hundred and twenty acres under wheat, barley and potatoes could expect to multiply their holdings several times over within a few years? And yet, to the readers Grant knew to be numerous in Canada at the time, the enterprising, back-county farmers of Upper Canada and the Maritimes, what could matter more? This was information of interest and value indeed, and there can be little doubt that Grant knew exactly what he was doing when he larded out his narrative with just such tidbits of circumstantial detail about the homes and farms he visited. Hence, too, the repeated notations, all along the government party's route of travel, of specific evidences of the region's fertility, timber supply, varieties of flora, types of soil, kind and location of water sources, and so on.

G. M. Grant had come to the Northwest prepared to pronounce in the country's favour -- if he could conscientiously do so. Although he evinced a fine scorn for what he called "buncombe," the irresponsible promotion of lands unsuited to agricultural settlement (OTO, 91), his guiding principle (as he himself candidly admitted) was that "positive evidence is worth infinitely more than negative" (OTO, 138). The evidence of his own eyes, on balance, was positive. Describing, for example, the government party's first day out of Fort Pitt, he wrote:

> This was one of our best days. Everything contributed to make it supremely enjoyable. We had fresh spirited horses under us, a cloudless sky and bright sun above; and an atmosphere exhilarating as some pure gentle stimulant. The country was of varied beauty; rich in soil, grasses, flowers, wood, and water, infinitely diversified in colour and outline. From elevated points, far and wide reaches of the same could be seen; here was no dreary monotonous prairie such as fancy had sometimes painted, but a land to live in and enjoy life (OTO, 153).

Furthermore, even where first-hand observation raised some misgivings in his mind, he was happy to record any "positive evidence" to the contrary that came his way. At Carlton, for example, Grant felt some stirrings of disappointment: the wood cover was sparse, he thought, and some of the water was definitely saline. "Mr. McDougal, however, ridiculed our doubts: we had only to go out of our road a little, to find a rich and beautiful country, extending north of the line of continuous forest, and to-morrow and every successive day, as we journeyed west, would show pretty much the same." And Grant went on to remark, in explanation of his informant's confident assessment of the region, "Faith in the future of the Saskatchewan and its 'fertile belt' is strong in the mind of almost every man who has lived on it" (OTO, 137).

The "Mr. McDougal" to whom Grant deferred on this particular occasion was George Millward McDougall, Chairman of the Saskatchewan District for the Methodist Church of Canada, and a veteran of ten years' residence in the western interior. With the Edmonton area as his headquarters, McDougall had travelled extensively throughout the whole Saskatchewan river system in the course of his mission activities among the Indians of the west; and his faith in the future of the Saskatchewan and its fertile belt was indeed strong, as the Sandford Fleming expedition had ample opportunity to discover during their month of travel across the plains.

According to John McDougall, George McDougall's son, he and his father first met the Fleming party in Winnipeg, where the annual Conference of the Methodist Church was being held, to honour George McDougall's work in western missions. "I had not been here [in Red River] since 1864," wrote John McDougall in In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, a volume of memoirs. "Eight years had made some change, but still the mass of Canadians -- to say nothing about the rest of the world -- were lamentably ignorant of this most fertile land" (RRR, 136). However:

> While we were in Winnipeg a distinguished party arrived en route across the continent, among whom were Mr. (now Sir Sandford) Fleming, Dr. Grant (later Principal of Queen's University) and Messrs. Macoun and Horetsky. This was a government party sent out for the purpose of taking a look over the country on a line proposed for the Canadian Pacific Railway. The world was moving, and at last our Government was awakening to some sense of the importance of the great West. We, who knew a little about the land, were glad to welcome this party (RRR, 240).

The welcome was reciprocated. In Ocean to Ocean, Grant describes how, with the Fleming party encamped for the night on "our first evening on the prairie,"

> Scarcely were our fires lighted when another traveller drove up, the Rev. Mr. McDougal, Wesleyan Missionary at Fort Victoria near Edmonton. We cordially welcomed him to our camp, and asked him to join our party. He was well known to us by reputation as a faithful Minister, and an intelligent observer of Indian character. He had been nine times over the plains, and evidently knew the country better than our guides (OTO, 78).

Throughout the month of August 1872, George McDougall travelled westward towards Edmonton with the government party, proving to be a most congenial companion, as far as Grant was concerned. Wrote Grant, in a diary entry of August 18:

> Took a much-needed long sleep, as usual on Sunday mornings; breakfasted at nine o'clock and had service at eleven, Mr. McDougal assisting. We are all much pleased with Mr. McDougal, and think ourselves fortunate in having fallen in with him. In his conversation and by his actions he shows himself thoroughly acquainted with the country, a man of ready resources and an obliging fellow traveller (OTC, 138).

Whereupon Grant, in fleshing out his diary notes for the published version of his account, pauses in the narrative to consider the subject which George McDougall's abilities and character have brought to mind: that of the "widely different opinions" which he has heard expressed about "the value of missionary work among the Indians."

For Grant, the value of that work was proven beyond doubt by his inspection of the Methodist missions at Victoria and Edmonton. "We had seen enough to-day," he recorded at Victoria, where George McDougall had worked for nearly nine years, "to convince us, more than all the arguments in the world, that missionary labour among the Indians is a reality, and that the positive language on the other side is the language of ignorance, self-interest or down-right opposition to the Gospel." He continued:

> As the Indian has no chance of existence except by conforming to civilized ways, the sooner that the Government or the Christian people awake to the necessity of establishing schools among every tribe the better. Little can be done with the old, it may be two or three generations before old habits among a people are changed; but, by always taking hold of the young, the work can be done. A Mission without schools is a mistake, almost a crime. And the Methodists deserve the praise of having seen and vigorously acted on this, and they can,

> therefore, point to more visible proofs of success in their Indian missions than perhaps any other church (OTO, 166-7).

Both as a man of ready resource in travel, then, and as a discerning and effective missionary to the Indians, George McDougall earned the friendship and commendation of the Fleming party's secretary. Yet it was probably on voicing his whole-hearted support for the government expedition's work that McDougall most ingratiated himself with Grant. Wrote Grant of the Sunday that they spent at Victoria Mission, "The kindness of everyone at Victoria was something not soon to be forgotten. They welcomed us for our own sakes, and for the end the expedition had in view, as they had long prayed for the opening up of the country" (OTO, 168).

It is from hints such as these, infrequent and casual though they are, that G. M. Grant makes it possible to begin reconstruction of a viewpoint on "the opening up of the country" to set beside the one which characterizes The Great Lone Land; for Grant portrays "Mr. McDougal" as an individual whose thoughts on western settlement, and on the treatment of the Indians, had been formed on the basis of a long experience in the region. In fact, Ocean to Ocean would have been a rather different book had George Millward McDougall not shared the camp of the Fleming Expedition during their travels to Edmonton; McDougall's opinions on the suitability of the country for settlement, his knowledge of the best routes and methods of travel, and above all his recommendations on specific measures for the regulation of the Northwest's immediate future, all permeate the prairie segment of Grant's narrative. Such an assertion is difficult to prove to a modern reader, however; for although Grant could write of McDougall, "He was well known to us by reputation as a faithful Minister, and an intelligent observer of Indian character," the century since McDougall's death in 1876 has almost effaced that reputation. If Canadian readers of the 1970's know anything at all about George McDougall, their knowledge has probably been gained largely through Grant's portrait of the missionary in Ocean to Ocean.

Not so much to illuminate the practice of G. M. Grant as a travel-writer, however, as to lay essential groundwork for an understanding of the books of John McDougall, the missionary's eldest son, does it become necessary to provide for the reader of this study, a rather fuller sketch of the life and work of George McDougall than can be obtained from Ocean to Ocean. In the person of George McDougall, the events and issues which connect the travel books of William Francis Butler and John McDougall find their source and their focus. With a view, therefore, to demonstrating what part George McDougall played in the literary history of the west, the remaining pages of the present chapter, and all of the one to follow, will be given over to introducing the reader to one of Canada's lesser-known figures, using as far as possible the missionary's own words, from his letters and journals. This part of the study constitutes the "digression" of which I warned the reader in my introduction -- a momentary turning-away, for a purpose, from the cultural and literary analysis which the chapters on The Great Lone Land pursued, and which later chapters, on the writings of John McDougall, will return in due course. In the meantime, the emphasis will continue for a space on the historical moment: specifically, on the years and months leading up to the visit of Lieutenant W. F. Butler to Victoria Mission, George McDougall's home, at Christmas-time, 1870.

George McDougall was born in Kingston in 1820, to parents of Highland Scots background. His boyhood was spent in backwoods settlements on the Penatanguishene Road, which ran north and west of the town of York in Upper Canada. Not until after his conversion to Methodism, at the age of eighteen, did he learn to read and write. At twenty-one he married, and began the series of undertakings which, throughout the 1840's, would see him work in turn as farmer, sailor, trader and builder. Alongside these varied occupations, however, one constant task prevailed. This was his lay ministry to the Indians of the Bruce Peninsula, whose victimization by the combined forces of disease, alcohol, and government indifference aroused in him a growing determination, amounting by the end of the decade to a settled vocation, to channel his energies into staving off the complete demoralization of the country's native peoples. In 1849 he entered Victoria College, Coburg, for a single term of formal training for the ministry; in 1856, after several years of full-time probationary work among the Indians of Garden River, he was ordained as a missionary. Within four years he was named by his church to the position of Superintendent of Missions for the whole Saskatchewan District.

McDougall welcomed this appointment. His work among the tribes of Upper Canada had largely been one of reclamation from the brink of disaster, with results that were small and difficult to maintain. Among the Indians of Rupert's Land, he hoped to prevent a repetition of this dismal history. From his new station at Rossville Mission, near Norway House, George McDougall wrote on December 24, 1860:

> It is generally admitted that the great misfortune of the Canadian natives is their scattered position; this is not only their weakness politically, and a large additional expense to the cause of missions, but it has also greatly retarded their civilization. The time was when these bands [i.e. the bands of Upper and Lower Canada] might have been collected in one community; and we believe had our fathers, thirty years ago, possessed the experience and influence of our Mission Board at the present day, the work of centralizing would have been accomplished. The opportunity for such a consummation is now forever gone; the fair lands of the Indians have passed into the hands of the "Pale-face," and all Christianity can do for them now is to watch over their spiritual and educational interest. This we are glad to know is not the position of the Indians of Hudson's Bay. What might have been done for the Chippewa, may still be accomplished for the numerous tribes of this country.
>
> . . . The present time is auspicious. This country is now in its transition state, the eyes of the speculator and the farmer are turned towards it; already the pale-face trader and trapper have traversed its plains to the very base of the Rocky Mountains. Soon its rich valleys will be changed into fruitful fields.
>
> Shall a home be secured for the original proprietors? or shall they be left to drink the bitter cup of poverty and neglect, and at last perish as a people? Philanthropists, Christians, you whose hearts bleed for others' woe, we look to you, and may the God of the oppressed speed the right (GMM, 77-81).

The job turned out to be bigger and more complicated than he had thought. Obviously, philanthropists and Christians must act quickly if they were to have any practical influence on the political future of the Indians of Rupert's Land; and they must act in force. Instead, McDougall found himself in charge of half a dozen isolated missions, reaching a tiny fraction of the region's native people. Undaunted, he decided on yet one more westward removal for himself and his growing family -- by 1861, eight children, the youngest an infant born at Rossville during that year. In the summer of 1863, the mission at Victoria, ninety miles downstream from Edmonton, was formally established, augmenting those of Henry B. Steinhauer at Whitefish Lake and Thomas Woolsey at Edmonton. The McDougall family spent the next four years in building up their tiny mission outpost on the North Saskatchewan River.

In 1867, McDougall returned briefly to Older Canada in search of reinforcements for the mission effort in the interior. There, throughout the winter of 1867-8, he toured the cities, small towns and farming communities of what was now the province of Ontario, giving speeches on the two subjects uppermost in his mind: the needs of Methodist missions among the Indians, and the splendid potential of the western interior region as a field for agricultural settlement. On both counts, his speaking tour brought results. There were many among his listeners in Ontario who heard what he had to say about the west, and liked what they heard: among them, the Mooney family of Grey County, whose daughter Nellie was to make her mark on the west.[11] According to John McDougall, too, the emigration of Kenneth McKenzie, the pioneer settler of Rat Creek whom we have already met through the pages of W. L. Morton and G. M. Grant, was the direct consequence of George McDougall's visit. "That one talk by father in the town of Guelph during the winter of 1867-8 had brought these instinctive makers of empire [the McKenzies] and through them hundreds of others, to this land of rich promise," John wrote in his memoirs (RRR, 264).

The prior need, however, in George McDougall's mind at least, was to expand the work of western missions. Half a dozen teachers and ordained staff volunteered to accompany him on his return to the west in the spring of 1868; a rather larger number of his listeners carried away from his speeches and sermons a new sense of the urgency of the Indians' situation, subsequently voicing their concern in their letters to their legislators, and to the editors of the church missionary papers. In the meantime, McDougall went back to his varied and strenuous labours among the Cree and Stoney tribes, knowing that final negotiations were now in train for the Transfer of Rupert's Land to the newly-created Dominion authority in Ottawa.

In obedience to the requirements of his church, McDougall kept a journal of his activities, observations and reflections during his fourteen years among the Indians of the Edmonton area. Although excerpts from this journal form part of John McDougall's later biography of his father, the journal itself is no longer to be found.[12] What we are principally left with, then, as a record of George McDougall's life during the critical years of transition in the west, are his letters to his church superiors in Toronto. These letters were intended both for their recipients' information, and for publication, at their discretion, in the religious periodical press of the time: a form of reading matter, we must remember, considerably more influential in shaping public opinion then than now. The letter quoted above on page 126 was published in the Christian Guardian;

others were printed in Wesleyan Missionary Notices, Canada Conference, Series 1-3 (1854-1878), the publication which served as the single most vital link between McDougall's remote western station, and the Methodist faithful in Older Canada. Through the pages of Missionary Notices, McDougall did everything in his power to place the needs of his mission before the consciences of his co-religionists, while through the same means keeping up as best he could with developments in the east. Twice yearly the packet arrived in Edmonton from Fort Garry, the church papers addressed to the resident missionary forming a large part of the post's reading material for the next six months.

The letters of George McDougall, as published in these church papers, demonstrate what (given his late and minimal schooling) should come as no great surprise to the reader: that he was far from being what most observers, then or now, would call a man of high mental culture. Rather, they show a man of unshakeable religious commitment whose powers of organization, however effective they may have been when applied to practical affairs, often failed him when he tried to write of his experiences. There are, in the letters, obtrusive lapses of grammar, syntax and spelling, instances of faulty sequence and causation in sentence structure, incongruous groupings of subject-matter, and certainly an over-all intellectual naiveté in style and argument. Whatever their limitations as specimens of prose composition, however, McDougall's letters to his superiors, and through them to the Methodists of Canada, offer a sharply-focussed spotlight on a period of gathering crisis in the west. Having committed his own life and that of his entire family to what his son would later call "the work for God and country," George McDougall suddenly, in the latter half of 1869, began to see the whole enterprise threatened with disaster.

In the summer of 1869, drought cut back the produce of the farm at Victoria, placing renewed strain on the mission's provisioning system. McDougall wrote concerning this situation to Rev. Enoch Wood at the Methodist Mission Rooms in Toronto:

> The rich valleys hitherto encumbered with vegetation are now parched and burnt. Fifty miles south of Victoria we met parties who informed us that our fields were a failure. The seed had dried up in the earth. This was sad news. The season was too far advanced to send to Red River. Benton is much nearer, but between us and that place the merciless Blackfeet ranges the plains. There was but one course open, and that was to strike for the buffalo country. For months we had lived on flesh and fowl, and for eighteen months to come we have no prospect of a change.[13]

Characteristically, McDougall was able to accept this disappointment with firm resolve, and even a little humour. In the same letter, in a notation dated August 18, 1869, he wrote, "For years pemmican has been the staple dish on our table, yet I must confess, I have very little relish for tallow and pounded meat. My wife says that it is better not to think of bread, while we cannot have it, as the thought might cause impatience. I shall not controvert her opinion, but judging from my feelings this morning, the sight of a four pound loaf would produce in my poor heart the liveliest gratitude."

The state of inter-tribal relations was a more serious affair. Over the previous winter, one of McDougall's most influential converts among the Cree, the respected chief Maskepetoon, had been murdered and dismembered by a party of Blackfoot. "Since the murder of our lamented chief," McDougall wrote,

> the Crees have killed nearly one hundred Blackfeet, and in retaliation the enemy has resolved to carry the war into the Cree country. They have sent us word that they have spotted the Company's posts on the Saskatchewan, and in particular Victoria. Pray for us. Our dangers and difficulties are almost insurmountable. We deeply feel that nothing but an ardent love for souls, and a strong trust in God's mighty power, not only to save, but to restrain, will carry us through these times.

In order to avert wholesale bloodshed among the Indians, and with the safety of his wife and children in mind, McDougall and his eldest son John rode southward in late August to arrange a huge camp meeting of all the region's tribes in some central location on the plains. A journal entry for August 23, 1869, transcribed for this same letter to Dr. Wood, was written at a place called Iron Creek; and since later reference will be made to this notation, it is quoted here in full as it appeared in the May 1870 issue of Missionary Notices:

> August 23rd, Iron Creek. -- This beautiful stream derives its name from a strange formation, said to be pure iron. The piece weighs 300 lbs. It is so soft you can cut it with a knife. It rings like steel when struck with a piece of iron. Tradition says that it has lain out on the hill ever since the place was first visited by Na-ne-boo-sho after the flood had retired. For ages the tribes of Blackfeet and Crees have gathered their clans to pay homage to this wonderful manitoo. Three years ago, one of our people put the idol in his cart and brought it to Victoria. This roused the ire of the conjurors. They declared that sickness, war, and decrease of buffalo would follow the sacrilege. Thanks to a kind Providence, these soothsayers have been confounded, for last summer thousands of wild cattle grazed upon the sacred plain.

A week later, McDougall was writing to Dr. Wood from the place of meeting on the plains. The circumstances were tense. Wrote McDougall on September 1st, "The great camps, the Edmonton, the

Victoria, and the Blackfeet, numbering more than 10,000 souls, are all within a short ride of each other. The plain Crees, driven in by the Blackfeet, have fled to us for protection. The Edmonton people have had a skirmish with the enemy, and blood was shed. Last evening the Blackfeet sent us word that they would fight us to-day at noon, and 300 men are anxiously waiting for them." George McDougall, however, took the whole affair with his usual presence of mind; and in the sentences that follow he explains the reason for his calm in the face of this explosive situation. "I have ventured to say they will not come," he wrote. "A long experience among red men has satisfied me that when they threaten they seldom strike. The Blackfeet are also aware that there are two missionaries in the camp, and their superstition will prevent them from coming."

It is entirely typical of McDougall's habits of prose composition that this notation of immediate, momentary danger should be followed, in the same letter, by a long passage describing and reflecting on the larger issues of his work among the Indian tribes; and since, once again, the remainder of this lengthy letter contains matter that bears on the present study, both by way of historical record and by way of demonstrating challenge-and-response at work in western Canada in the 1860's, McDougall's words will be quoted extensively here, with occasional editorial interpolation for the sake of clarity. Following, then, on the sentences just given above, we read:

> With feelings not easily expressed, I sat upon a knoll and reflected upon surrounding circumstances. Our tents are pitched upon one of the most magnificent plains in America. Unnumbered herds of cattle are fattened on free pasturage.
>
> Hundreds of lakes offer drink to man and beast. Here we have a perfect realization of a hunter's dream, and what are the facts? sin has poisoned all. In these camps we see the untrained development of the vilest passions, hating and being hated. There is no peace for the wretched people. Their degradation cannot be written. One hardly knows how to apologise for the mis-statements of intelligent tourists, who have travelled these plains. They must have wrote as they ran. Their descriptions of the noble, virtuous, honest native, are all from the pure ideal point of view.
>
> Let them come down to real work, and study the language and life of the people, and live amongst them, as your missionaries have to do, and they will be able to appreciate the wonderful change wrought on many of them by the teaching of the Gospel.

Then comes the better part of a page giving details of what McDougall calls "the slavery of demon worship," leading up to the conclusion that "if civil law and Gospel light are not speedily brought to the rescue of these tribes, they will perish from the earth."

At this point, McDougall returns for a moment to the distinction which he has made in his letter between "the pure ideal point of view" on the Indian held by "intelligent tourists," and the very different understanding of the Indian's nature and way of life arrived at by the working missionary. His intent, clearly, is to correct what he considers to be misrepresentations of actual conditions, "mis-statements" of fact. He goes on:

> Making plain provisions in the hunter's camp, with all its wild surroundings, the man of leisure may pass his time very pleasantly; but there is another class, who find more of fact than fiction in killing wild cattle -- to this party belongs the missionary.
>
> A long winter stares him in the face. There is no market where he can go for supplies. Offer a man gold for flour in the Saskatchewan and he would laugh at you. $60 per barrel has been tendered to the Hudson Bay Company, and the money been refused; and no wonder, for every pound

> of the precious luxury has been dragged over the 1,800 miles from St. Paul, and that in Red River carts.

"But the good time is coming," McDougall went on to write, as if bent on assuring Enoch Wood that he was able to find compensation for present deprivations in his hopes for the future:

> The royal standard is now supplanting the bunting of the Hudson Bay Company. Brother Dominionites! our majestic rivers invite your steamboats; our natural road extending from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains, wide as the limitless prairie, is waiting for your land transport. This wild uncouth younger brother of the confederation family only waits for the chance for development, and the youth will become, what geographically and naturally he is, the heart and soul of the country.

And with this ringing declaration, McDougall is reminded once more that he is digressing. Calling himself and his readers back to the original subject -- what the missionary knows of life among the Indians, and how he comes to know it -- he continues:

> But now I must go back to the camp [that is, return his readers' attention to details of camp life], and the first thing is to kill the animal, cut it up, and bring the meat to your tent. Then the process of curing and drying takes place. Then follows pounding and making up pemmican. . . . Then you must shoe your own horse, mend carts, and what is more trying, keep a day and night guard upon your animals, for horses are constantly disappearing very mysteriously. These are some of the toils of the hunter. The missionary has additional ones. Night and morning he collects the people for prayer; he must visit the sick; his tent must be a refuge for the aged and for the afflicted. The avenger of blood is awaiting his time; the missionary must be the mediator.[14]

The sensitivity of the Methodist missionaries as a group to what they considered unfair or uninformed estimates of their work among the Indians, we know at least in part from letters which passed between Thomas Woolsey, Methodist missionary at Edmonton, and the Earl of Southesk, in 1860.[15] That George McDougall knew of this exchange is proven by a letter of his own, dated December 25, 1862, which mentions a Stoney Indian "referred to by Lord Southesk in his correspondence with the Church Missionary Society" (GMM, 100). It may, in fact, have been this very correspondence which called forth McDougall's objections in his letter to the "mis-statements of intelligent tourists" on the subject of the Indians, Southesk also serving as the model for the "men of leisure" who found more of fiction than of fact in the making of provisions on the plains. Or perhaps, on the other hand, he had in mind another sporting party of the early 1860's, that of Viscount Milton and Dr. Cheadle, whose narrative of travel in Rupert's Land, Northwest Passage by Land, was published in 1865 (and therefore would have been available for McDougall to read when he visited Ontario in 1867-8).[16] Whatever the provocation for these phrases, however, they do serve to demonstrate conclusively McDougall's own personal sensitivity to ignorance and bias among visitors to the interior, and his readiness to offer counter-statements based on long experience in the "real work" of Indian missions.

One of the over-riding "facts" of McDougall's life at the time was that, as he wrote, "the missionary must be the mediator." In the context of the situation described in the letter, these words refer to McDougall's interventions in the blood-feuds of the Indians, as he tried to impart an understanding of justice which went beyond privately-exacted revenge. Yet the role of mediator was one which McDougall himself knew to be considerably more inclusive and far-reaching in significance than simple justice of the peace. From a lifetime of experience among Canada's native peoples -- upwards of twenty years in Ontario, and now nearly ten years more among the tribes of the west -- he knew at first hand the traumatic effects of confrontation between white and Indian cultures -- knew of those effects not in vague, theoretical generalization, but in painful, laborious, demoralizing detail. "I buried a murdered white man a short time ago," he wrote to his mission superiors in the east (this from a letter of 1866). "As yet we have been saved through the Mercy of our God. A change is at hand, the Miners by hundreds are coming amongst us, and they will avenge themselves on the Blackfeet. May we receive help to stand between the Christian Cree, and Stoney, and the white man, until order can be effected."[17] During all his years among the western Indian tribes, it is apparent that it was in the spirit of assimilating detail -- the apparently random facts of day-to-day experience -- to the wider and deeper objectives of the evangelical Christian mission, that George McDougall characteristically approached his self-imposed task as mediator, as interpreter and go-between and shield, in the seemingly inevitable collision to come.

By the summer of 1869, when the long letter to Dr. Wood was written, it was clear to all thinking persons in the west that the collision was upon them. The officers of the Hudson's Bay Company had known throughout the decade that an era was drawing to a close; now negotiations for the Transfer of Rupert's Land were virtually complete. As a patriot (and although the word has a distinctly archaic ring to it now, it was replete with meaning to McDougall's generation), George McDougall welcomed the expansion of the older provinces into the interior, as we know from his letters. Yet other records from the same summer show that the country's development was not his sole concern. Writing for the information of his church superiors, and knowing that his letters were regularly published at considerable length, McDougall composed a heartfelt essay on "The Importance of an Immediate Settlement with the Plain Tribes." "Every resident in this country," he began,

> knows that a feeling of dissatisfaction prevails to an alarming extent among these Indians. Six years ago the sight of a pale face in a Cree camp was a cause of rejoicing; now the very opposite is the fact. One of the principal reasons is the rapid decrease of the buffalo. In the winter of 1867-8 these Indians suffered great destitution, and the whole cause is attributed to the whites. Recent events have added much to their previous dissatisfaction. In all past time they have regarded the honorable Company as the highest representative of the Queen. Now a rumor reaches them that a power greater than that Company will soon be here to treat with them for their lands. Injudicious parties have informed them that their old neighbours have received a large sum for these lands, and the Indian is not so ignorant but to enquire to whom he has ever ceded his hunting-grounds. They have no idea of civil government. We have spent days in trying to explain to them that they would be justly dealt with, and the answer invariably has been: "The Hudson Bay Company told our grandfathers that always, and you missionaries have been repeating the same story for twenty years, and yet nothing has been done." These men are exceedingly jealous of the miner and the settler, and a collision with either party will bring upon this noble country all the horrors of not simply war, but massacre.

"Of these Indians I speak from personal observation," he went on to write. "For years I have visited them in their camps. Last summer, in company with my son, who has a perfect knowledge of their language, we spent eighteen weeks amongst them, attended their councils and listened to their speeches, and the impression received was, if Canada is going to extend her humane policy to these Indians, there is no time to be lost." And the paper concludes:

> With all the ardor of a Canadian who loves his country, and who desires for its honor that justice may be done this remnant of a once numerous people, I would advise that no time be lost in meeting them at their councils, treating with them for their lands, and by potent explanation, allaying the present excitement.
>
> Let it not be forgotten that in the upper Saskatchewan there are at least 20,000 natives who by a wise and just policy can be made the friends of the Government. Let this once be accomplished and the country will speedily be settled. Between the Bow River and the North Saskatchewan there are gold fields of sufficient extent to fill this country with an enterprising population. There are now scores of families who would gladly settle in the neighbourhood of Victoria, but the best friends of the country must discourage immigration until the Indians are treated with (GMM, 150-152).[18]

Commenting on this submission from the Chairman of the Saskatchewan District, the editor of Missionary Notices indicated his complete agreement. Wrote Enoch Wood:

> It will be the duty of our rulers to respect the rights of thousands of Indians who now claim that territory as their own, and by which alone they live, principally through the chase and the products of their vast rivers and lakes. If a wealthy corporation is to be paid three hundred thousand pounds sterling, beside other untold advantages, as the country becomes inhabited and improved, the rights of the Indian must command the most thoughtful consideration of a Christian Government. Justice, humanity, and good policy, all call for this, and in accomplishing this end there will be found no agency so powerful as the religious one.[19]

The agency, that is, that was already on the grounds, striving to bring "civil law and Gospel light" to the rescue of an otherwise imperilled race. Thus the assumption in the editorial columns of Missionary Notices that the letters being published therein must be of vital interest to a "Christian Government."

VII

THE LETTER OF A WESTERN MISSIONARY

The particular Christian Government to which Wood was directing his appeal, of course, was the one currently in power in Ottawa. Presumably the members of John A. Macdonald's ministry were all at least professing Christians; presumably, too, they had been giving some thoughtful consideration to the Indian question in the Northwest, having fully as much interest as George McDougall in seeing that the country was speedily settled. Yet it is unlikely that the politicians who made up that Christian Government were quite as ready to assume, with the same degree of assurance as a Methodist churchman, that civil law and Gospel light could so easily be conjoined, especially in the peculiar context of Canadian politics. For "Gospel light" is an inflected term in the vocabulary of theological discourse. It belongs not to an all-inclusive concept of "the religious agency," nor even to the slightly more restricted one of "Christian civilization." Rather, it belongs to one main branch of Christianity, the Protestant branch. Especially is it to be found in the speech and writings of evangelical movements within Protestantism; and there was, in nineteenth century Canada, no more vigorous growth in the religious life of the country than that of Methodism.

Believing that The Word reached its greatest effectiveness when given the relative permanence of printed words, the Methodists were institutionally committed to disseminating the Gospel not only through sermon and example, but through cheap, portable publications. Thus did the itinerant preachers of Methodism carry Gospel light to frontier communities throughout North America; thus too did they perceive a means of reaching the heathen Indians of Rupert's Land, thanks to the system of Cree syllabic transcription worked out by James Evans and his associates. Furthermore, their unlettered converts once having been introduced to the techniques of literacy, so that they might have direct personal access to the teachings of the Gospel, it was only a short step for the Methodists to expand their Sunday-schools into more ambitious educational projects, like the night-school at which George McDougall had first learned to read and write, or the kind of industrial school for Indian children run by Elder Case at Alderville. As G. M. Grant quite correctly transcribed in Ocean to Ocean, Methodism believed in taking hold of the young, educating them for taking up their adult relations with Christian civilization and Christian government.

Their work with the Indians, however, involved the Methodists in other secular occupations besides education and the publishing business. Experience with Indian missions had shown that before the work of instruction in civic responsibilities could begin, steps must be taken to see that the natives could continue to live -- quite simply, to support life -- since advancing white settlement into Indian territories invariably threatened the Indians's traditional food supply. Not only must missionaries for the church experiment with the agricultural resources of their stations, then, in the aim of making missions self-supporting, but they must also try to interest the Indians in farming as a way of life. So the complex of objectives grew, until Methodist consciences found themselves addressing the task of total integration of primitive aboriginal cultures into that of an expansionist white society, of which the Methodists themselves formed only one element, although a far from negligible one. And in so doing, they inevitably found themselves involved in yet one more quarrel with their chief competitors in mission work, the Roman Catholic Church.

When in the course of historical enquiry we encounter a rivalry between the spokesmen of competing sects within Christianity, like the one which indubitably did exist between Methodist and Catholic missions in the Edmonton area in the 1860's and '70's, there is a natural temptation to interpret their relations in terms of theological issues alone. It is, however, a temptation which much acquaintance with the history of this country teaches us to resist. For the Catholic/Protestant split has touched on the political and social life of Canada at so many points, that expressions of political or social or religious affiliation can seldom escape the resonances of a wide range of associated values. Well might George McDougall describe himself as "a Canadian who loves his country," and go on to exhort his "Brother Dominionites" to take up the task of development of the west. Yet we recognize at once that the particular Canadian who wrote those words intended them to be taken in a far less inclusive sense than their surface meaning imparts. George McDougall was a Canadian, to be sure; but more specifically, he was a white, Methodist, Anglophone Upper Canadian of Scots descent, one who had lived out his life in the context of pioneer experience and pioneer attitudes; and if as an individual he wins considerable respect for his exceptional sense of vocation to an oppressed people, he was nonetheless all too typically Upper Canadian in the suspicions he entertained of the Roman Catholic church and its French and Irish adherents. "Brother Dominionites": brothers, that is, if they were Protestants of loyal British stock -- "Anglos," in McDougall's own word. But republicans, Papists, Fenians and Francophones -- all these, by their various divergences from the loyalties McDougall himself lived by, must stand excluded from the brotherhood.

Seen simply in the context of theological controversy, George McDougall's letters have naturally proved to be something of an embarrassment to his United Church apologist, J. E. Nix. In Mission Among the Buffalo, the only book of scholarly research to date on the work of the McDougalls, Nix writes:

> It would be pleasant to be able to record that these two churches, Methodist and Roman Catholic, were able to work in the same area with a common understanding, if not harmony, but such was far from the case. . . . It was a time, as Professor A. S. Morton justly remarks, "when loyalty to one's creed was a predominant characteristic of all types of Christians." Whatever the Roman Catholics may have thought of the Methodists from their side, it is very plain that the Methodists considered themselves to be in mortal combat with the Romanists for the souls of the people. In the last hundred years many winds theological and revolutionary have blown away at least most outward manifestations of Christian rivalry and antagonism, but unquestionably a major motivation in missionary expansion throughout the McDougalls' period was this struggle and no account of the period could ignore it.[1]

As a responsible historian, then, Nix knows that he cannot "ignore" this most unlovely feature of missionary enterprise in the middle and later nineteenth century; the best he can do to palliate the Methodists' part in it is first to establish, on the authority of A. S. Morton, that it was a failing common to all types of Christians, and then to put on record this mild censure, that "the violence of Methodist outbursts in the missionaries' letters and missionary conferences is striking, if not edifying." This censure Nix goes on to illustrate in conscientious detail; and he does so by quoting at length from one missionary letter which, he remarks, "gives the Methodist attitude toward their Roman Catholic opponents as well as any passage."[2] The letter in question was one which appeared in *Missionary Notices* in May, 1870, bearing the date of January 9th of that year. Its point of origin was Victoria Mission; its author, George McDougall. The section of the letter which Nix quotes, and which is reproduced in full below, is headed, "The Papacy." Wrote McDougall:

> The man of sin is powerfully represented in this country. There are five priests to one Protestant missionary; they are anti-British in their national sympathies; and if we may judge the tree by its fruits, anti-Christian in their teachings. Their converts have a zeal, but their fervour prompts them to propagate a system, not a Saviour. By them the Sabbath is desecrated, polygamy tolerated, and the Bible ignored. Their churches are the toy shops where the poor heathen get their play-things, such as idols, beads, and charms, and where the Anglo is denounced as no better than a brute beast, or, to quote from one of their sermons, "no better than the buffalo that herd on the plains." They carry with them large pictures, representing two roads, one terminating in Paradise, the other in a bottomless pit; on the downward track, all Protestants are travelling, surrounded by demons and lost spirits. By these baptismal regenerationists, the sacred ordinance has been so desecrated that many of the

> heathen receive it as they would a charm from one of their sorcerers. One of the tricks of these gentlemen is, when a child is born in a Protestant family, a female agent enters the tent, fondles the infant, and then, professing to show it to their friends, carries it to the priest, who baptizes the babe. The policy of the Protestant missionaries has been to avoid controversy and simply to preach Christ. The very opposite has been the practice of the Priest. And if trouble should arise between the tribes of this country and the whites, the cause, in large degree, will lie at the door of the Papacy.
>
> These priests are hard workers: summer and winter they follow the camps, suffering great privations. They are indefatigable in their efforts to make converts, and when made, if stript of the eternal badges of Popery, are still heathen; for of them it may be truthfully said, they have not so much as heard of the Holy Ghost. These poor baptized Pagans have never been pointed to the Lamb of God.

The points at which this letter illustrates Rev. Nix's remarks are too many, and too obvious, to require detailed comment here. Included in the letter are accusations all too familiar to the student of nineteenth century religious history, couched in language that is also standard in such polemics. What is not standard, however, is one remarkable sentence two-thirds of the way through the passage quoted: "And if trouble should arise between the tribes of this country and the whites, the cause, in large degree, will lie at the door of the Papacy." Remarkable, because here McDougall makes a specific accusation of political responsibility against his Roman Catholic competitors -- an accusation prepared for, early in the letter, by his description of the priests as "anti-British in their national sympathies." And it is, I would suggest, this evidence of "rivalry and antagonism" not religious alone, but "national" as well, which enables us better to comprehend the "violence" which Nix discerned in McDougall's tone in his letter.

For George McDougall's ministry to the western Indians -- his "work for God and country" -- was, at the very time of the writing of this particular letter, visibly threatened by dangers which McDougall had long foreseen, and long worked to avert. All during the autumn of 1869, rumours of the impending Transfer had circulated the interior, contributing greatly to "the present excitement" which McDougall had described in his earlier letter of August 1869. At the year's end, these rumours were supplemented by other, more disturbing news. "With the New Year," wrote John McDougall in his memoirs, "there came to us, by way of rumour passed from camp to camp, the strange news that there was serious trouble in the Red River settlement. Mysterious messages came to the leading Indians, tobacco to be smoked, and a cause to be joined which promised wonderful things in the near future" (RRR, 115).[3] Assuming that John McDougall's record of the time can be relied on, and that it was indeed "with the New Year" that rumours of the Métis resistance reached Victoria, then there can be little difficulty accounting for the eruption of strong feeling in George McDougall's letter of January 9th, 1870.[4] Serious trouble in Red River meant serious trouble for the whites of the interior. Before George McDougall's experienced eyes loomed the spectre of "all the horrors of not simply war, but massacre."

As the early months of 1870 went by, the pressures on the mission's residents multiplied alarmingly. From the east came reports that the Hudson's Bay Company posts, and the missions too, were to be cut off by the Métis resistance from their normal base of supply in

Fort Garry. From the south came rumours of small-pox among the plains Indians of the Missouri. Although the prospect of a small-pox epidemic was frightening enough to the mission family, entirely cut off from medical aid, what they feared even more were the effects of this rumour on the far-more-susceptible native peoples. During the early spring of 1870 George McDougall realized that apprehension and uncertainty among the Indians had seriously undermined the trust which he and his family had worked for ten years to establish between natives and whites. Then, in early May, came a ray of hope. Word reached Victoria that, although affairs in Fort Garry were still at a stalemate, supplies for the coming year might yet be obtained from the settlement. Judging that the eight hundred mile journey east, rebellion or no rebellion, was still a safer venture than the shorter trip to Fort Benton through Blackfoot territory, McDougall set off to obtain the much-needed supplies. He had other objectives as well:

> Hoping the Government would be established, and certain that if something was not done war and destitution were before us, I accompanied an H. B. Company's officer, with the determination, if possible, to accomplish two objects. First, the appointment of 100 soldiers to Fort Edmonton. We have many loyal people, but no combination. Most of the roughs of last winter are going to the Saskatchewan. Second: I wished to impress on the Government the importance of sending a Commissioner to visit the Crees. I would not advise that their lands should be treated for now; this might be premature; and they would be satisfied for the time if informed that they would be justly dealt with. If this is delayed, trouble is before us.[5]

Travelling in the established McDougall style, he and the Company's officer made the journey from Victoria to Fort Garry -- eight hundred miles by horseback -- in less than twenty days. There, from the relative quiet of George Young's mission in Winnipeg

McDougall wrote more letters. One was a letter to Enoch Wood, naming McDougall's customary scapegoats -- "priests and Fenians" -- as the source of unrest among the Cree of the interior.[6] Another was to be sent on to ex-Lieutenant-Governor William McDougall, residing in Ottawa since his debacle at Pembina six months before. To William McDougall, George McDougall wrote insisting that commissioners must come to treat with the Indians of the interior before the sending in of surveyors or settlers, "or some of us will pay the penalty with our lives for we have plenty of the same kind of roughs that have given trouble in Red River; and I might add, they have the same kind of teachers, a hatred of everything that bears the name of English."[7] And by "roughs" and their teachers, McDougall once again meant Fenians and Papists, the invariable villains in his script. "Our trouble is," McDougall wrote in his letter to Wood, "that most of the French half-breeds will run for the Saskatchewan when the troops arrive -- many are going now. How much Popery would like to frighten us out of the country! Thank the Lord, our Mission was never more prosperous."

The troops mentioned in McDougall's letter, as the reader knows, were those of Wolseley's Expeditionary Force; and despite his fears of what would happen on the Saskatchewan when the troops did arrive, no-one was more anxious than George McDougall to see the Métis insurgence put down. It was not until the latter part of July, however, after a month of rumours as to the Expedition's progress, that the settlement's inhabitants were given firm assurance that Wolseley and his force were definitely to be expected within the days and weeks to come. On the evening of July 20th, a British army officer arrived in Fort Garry on his way to meet the Expedition: Lieutenant William Francis Butler of Her Majesty's 69th Regiment.

Had Butler walked off the International dressed only in a British flag, he could hardly have announced his presence in the settlement more effectively than he did. The stir that Butler's arrival created in Red River is described in the final entries in Alexander Begg's Journal. After several pages of desultory record ("The mail went out as usual"; "The usual services took place"; "Nothing of interest"; "The mail went out as usual"), Begg's daily notations of events suddenly spring to life:

> Wednesday, 20th July, 1870
> Weather still warm but pleasant.
> The Steamer International came in this evening. As it rounded coming into the Assiniboine from the Red River it touched the point nearest Fort Garry when Willie Drever and a stranger jumped off. The stranger disappeared mysteriously and Wm. Drever went home. Soon afterwards W. Drever was arrested on account of the suspicious actions of himself and the stranger in thus jumping off the boat. The stranger said to be one Butler or Baker left some baggage on the boat.
>
> Thursday, 21st July, 1870
> Weather very warm.
> Some considerable excitement is felt over the disappearance of the stranger amongst the French.
> He has not turned up yet and a great many reports are circulating about him -- he gave himself out as an officer in the 69th Regiment -- and it is said had a dog with him as he said he was coming to Red River to have some hunting.
> It turns out that John Gordon and it is said Whiskey Tom took the stranger from the boat down to some place of safety in the Settlement.
> The Drevers and all their crowd are in great glee about it.
> The mail came in as usual bringing very little news.
> Wm. Drever is still in the Fort.
>
> Friday, 22nd July, 1870
> Weather gave token of being very warm during the day.
> This morning Riel received from Mr. J. H. McTavish a Proclamation from Genl. or Colonel Wolsey brought into the Settlement by the mysterious stranger. Riel after some

> consultation decided upon printing and issuing a couple of hundred copies and circulating them amongst the people.
> This was accordingly done and caused a great deal of feeling amongst the "trooly loyal" because Riel attempted to circulate a Royal Proclamation. They are disappointed again.
> The mysterious stranger has not turned up. W. Drever is still in the Fort.
> It is said Mr. Ballsillie has gone to the Stone Fort to try and get the stranger to come up.
> There is some considerable excitement about the stranger amongst all parties.[8]

On the basis of Begg's account, then, it seems fairly safe to say that by the time "the mysterious stranger" -- whom Begg was finally able to identify on July 23 as "Captain Butler of the 69th Regiment" -- left for his rendezvous with Wolseley, his name and mission were known to every politically-conscious individual within a fifty mile radius of Fort Garry.

George McDougall, as we know from his letters, was as politically conscious an individual as the western region possessed at the time. Whether he was still an observer of affairs in Fort Garry at the time of Butler's brief stay in the settlement is a little more difficult to judge with certainty. Two passages from In the Days of the Red River Rebellion suggest that he was; while further support for this supposition may be found in John McDougall's biography of his father.[9] Assuming, then, that McDougall left Red River on or about July 23, three days after Butler's arrival in the settlement bringing Wolseley's Proclamation, there can be no question that the missionary took back with him to the interior the welcome news of the imminent restoration of lawful government, as well as news of the British army officer who brought this looked-for assurance in such dramatic fashion.

What George McDougall found on his return to the mission at Victoria, however, must have made the affairs at Red River seem insignificant by comparison. To Enoch Wood he wrote, on August 16:

> At this mission, the past summer has been a time of danger and great anxiety. The Blackfeet, driven to desperation by the awful scourge which has cut off more than one half of their tribe, have sought to propitiate their deities by murder and robbery. They have stolen our horses and killed our cattle; articles of clothing and human hair, infected with the small-pox, have been left in our village, and so reckless of life were these wretched men, that of a war-party numbering eleven, who made a raid on Victoria, ten died. Some of their bodies were found by our people. Sad news has reached us from the Mountain Stonies. The Blackfeet left clothing in their neighbourhood; the thoughtless Stonies took the blankets, little thinking that one-half of their nation would be the price (GMM, 156).

Among the dead in the area of Victoria mission were "many of our best members," Cree Indians of long acquaintance. And even more alarming to the missionary, "Two days after my arrival John was taken very ill, and is now in a critical state. For weeks my dear boy has had very little rest. Day and night he has waited on the sick and the dying." The letter concludes, "Friends of suffering humanity, pray for us. Verily the judgements of a just God are now upon this land of blood and idolatry; and yet, of how many of these suffering creatures, it may be truly said, 'they know not their right hand from their left'" (GMM, 157).

If the spring and summer of 1870 imposed nearly intolerable strain on the mission family at Victoria, the autumn of that year brought almost unimaginable suffering. In his biography of his father, John McDougall included several extracts from the elder missionary's journal which record this terrible period in their lives.

From the first of these extracts: "The disease first appeared in my own family, and on the 13th of October our youngest daughter, aged eleven years, died. How precious to our bleeding hearts her dying words! Flora loved the Saviour." Then several further entries, beginning with that of October 23, 1870:

> We are now passing through deep waters, all prostrate with the fearful disease, except Mrs. McDougall, and she exhausted with watching. Yesterday I felt it was high time to set my house in order. For two nights my mind has been wandering, and what course the disease may take I cannot tell; but I bless God, come what will, I feel all is right. I feel I am an unworthy sinner, but a sinner saved by grace. I had a long conversation with my much-beloved daughter, Georgiana, and gave her directions as regards the future. Little did I think, as she stood beside me the picture of health and youthful energy, that before I fully recovered myself, I should lay her in the grave.10
>
> Last night she was taken very ill, and to-day it was distressing to witness the change that has taken place in her appearance.
> 24th. -- Last night I resolved to sit up, and not allow myself to sleep. Most earnestly I prayed that I might retain my senses, and, blessed be God, He has heard my prayer; and to-day, though the disease has developed, I am enabled to wait on others.
> 25th. -- This morning a Cree woman came to me and begged that I would baptize her infant grandchild, who has been taken ill with the small-pox. I walked to the tent and attended the duty; and though the day was stormy, I have felt no evil consequences (GMM, 160-1).

The daily catalogue of affliction continues. On October 28, "This morning I buried our Anna. . . . Anna was fourteen years old. She was the daughter of the late O-ga-mah-wah-shis. . . . We were all much attached to Anna." Then, on November 1, 1870:

> At five o'clock this afternoon our Georgiana breathed her last. The last intelligible words she uttered were prayer. . . . Georgiana died at her post. For months she has labored incessantly for the good of this suffering people. Conversant with their language and modes of thought, she

> proved herself a judicious counsellor. My kind neighbors, Messrs. Hardisty and Tait, brought the coffin and placed it at the gate, and my son [David] and self carried her mortal remains to the grave. When we were filling in the earth, he uttered an expression which found an echo in my poor heart. "Father, I find it hard to bury our own dead," but just then the words of the apostle were applied with such force to my mind that I could not restrain myself from shouting them aloud: "O, grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (GMM, 63-4).

The death of Georgiana McDougall was the third in less than a month from among the missionary's household of nineteen people. It was also the last that year. On November 18, the journal gives notice of a Quarterly Meeting, in these terms:

> After an intermission of two months, we have again ventured to hold a public service. Our meeting was deeply affecting: there were vacant seats to remind us of the past. There could be little done in the way of preaching. Both missionaries and people wept before the Lord. I could not refrain from reviewing the past. Since my connection with the mission more than one hundred adults, natives, have passed away. . . . Then the multitude of dear children, my own among the number, who delighted in singing the sweet songs of Zion. These have all disappeared from among the living. At first sight there was something very discouraging, and we felt that if in this life only we had hope, we should be most miserable, but ours is a work for eternity, and these are not lost to us. Our love-feast was a season of power; the Comforter was present (GMM, 164).

November 22, 1870 is the date of the next entry from George McDougall's journal provided by John McDougall in his biography of his father. Only a month before, the elder McDougall had written of his intention to set his own house in order in case he should not survive the night; now he was ready to start travelling again. Wrote George McDougall in his journal:

> Started for Edmonton in company with Captain Butler and Messrs. Hardisty and Clarke. The Captain is out on a tour of inspection, and takes a deep interest in the great North-West. He declares the fact is humiliating to an Englis[h]man that so fine a country should have been totally neglected. The weather is very fine, and plains free from snows, stock of all kinds taking care of themselves. When I told the Captain that the average of such was two out of three, he appeared surprised, and declared the country superior to parts of the United States immediately south of us. At Fort Edmonton we were cordially received by Mr. Christie, whose long residence in this country enabled him to give much valuable information to the Commissioner.
>
> On Monday I was present at a novel ceremony (at least in the Saskatchewan), the swearing in of Mr. Christie and Mr. Hardisty as magistrates for the western territory. Their power will be nominal until troops are sent in; and yet it will enable us to protect ourselves against the whiskey traders, for if we cannot enforce the law here, we shall assuredly follow them to Manitoba (GMM, 165).

As it happens, there are no further references to "Captain Butler" anywhere in the journal entries that have survived. Butler had arrived at Victoria just as the settlement's survivors were beginning to regroup after their two months under seige. The first official sign of the mission family's renewed hold on life had been the Quarterly Meeting of November 18, signifying the missionary's belief that danger from further infection was past, at least for the time being. From that point on, the winter passed with much worry and sorrow, certainly, and no little concern about the food supply; but there were no more deaths within the mission walls until the following spring, when the missionary's daughter-in-law, Abigail McDougall, fell victim on April 11 to a sudden attack of illness, probably small-pox.

On April 1, ten days before Abigail's unforeseen death, George McDougall once again wrote to Enoch Wood at the Methodist

Mission Rooms:

> Now that the dark cloud, which for more than a year has enveloped this land, begins to disperse, we naturally enquire, For what reason has God, in his mysterious providence, suffered these terrible things to come upon us? More than one third of the inhabitants have been swept away by that fearful disorder, the small-pox, and yet, however paradoxical the statement, the language of Joseph is applicable: 'But God meant it for good to bring to pass as it is at this day, to save much people.'

What McDougall could possibly have meant by this paradox might indeed have remained a mystery, had he not gone on to offer his own explanation; and since the paragraphs in which he does so illustrate the same mixture of motives, the same shading of religious belief with political interpretation, which was remarked on in the previous chapter, they are given here at some length. Here, then, is George McDougall's attempt to justify the ways of God to man:

> In the last three or four years, the Plain tribes have manifested a ferocity among themselves, and a contempt for the white-faced stranger, very striking when compared with their past history; so much so that all hopes of a peaceful settlement seemed to vanish.
>
> Last summer the Master of Life permitted a visitation which has deeply humbled these vain men; and while we witnessed with anguish of soul their indescribable sufferings, we also felt it was better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of man; better far to perish by pestilence than by sword -- the inevitable end if no change had come.
>
> . . . The poor Blackfeet, who for months, and that on Dominion soil, have been pillaged and depopulated by American alcohol traders, are now sending messages of peace. Their case on the part of our Government demands immediate attention, not only for the sake of the unfortunate natives, but also as regards the peace and prosperity of this great country. If multitudes of unprincipled men, to avoid the laws of their own country, can at pleasure cross our lines and establish scores of low grog-shops, then from the Missouri will roll back on us such a flood of intemperance and demoralization as shall make the fairest part of this North-West one vast field of blood and contention.
>
> . . . I know there are those who will say, "All right, the sooner the red-skin is swept from the plains the better."

> Thank God this is not the voice of Canada; her sons and daughters have been trained to sympathize with the poor Indian, and view with commiseration his struggle for existence before the ever-increasing flood of civilization. . . . Statesmen of Canada, here is a field worthy of your noblest efforts; Christian philanthropists, to you we appeal on behalf of a trodden down and rapidly perishing people (GMM, 173-5).

At some point during the months that followed, McDougall received official notice that the Indians' claim to the "immediate attention" of the government had been heard and heeded. We know this from a letter addressed to the editor of Wesleyan Missionary Notices, dated August 1, 1871, and bringing up a point of detail of immediate practical concern to the western missionaries. "Should the Government act upon Col. Butler's report," George McDougall wrote in this letter, "and purchase from the Crees six miles on each side of the Saskatchewan, extending from Dog Rump Creek to Edmonton, three of our missions will be in the new territory."[11] Although this reference to the report of "Col. Butler" (McDougall never did have Butler's correct rank clear in his mind) does not establish with finality the fact of McDougall's having read the report itself, that probability is very great. Butler's report having been made public by the government in Ottawa, it is not unreasonable to suppose that copies were circulated among the residents of the interior, who would have been intensely interested in its contents.[12]

The work of the Methodists of Victoria and Edmonton during the remainder of 1871 and the first seven months of 1872 must be passed over here without further comment. The transcripts from the writings of George McDougall offered in these pages have already been copious enough. The point of their having been offered, however, is to enable the reader who is otherwise unfamiliar with this figure in our history, to enter with some accuracy of insight into the mind and feelings of George McDougall when, in August of 1872, he travelled westward from Fort Garry with the Sandford Fleming Expedition. Whiskey traders, it is true, continued to ravage the Indians of the southern plains; moreover, labourers for the mission work were still very desperately needed. Nonetheless, it must have appeared to the missionary that affairs in the Northwest were taking a decided turn for the better, what with promises of troops for the interior, the institution of more regular mail communication, and now a government survey party, complete with recording secretary. We can be sure that George McDougall wasted no opportunity to point out to his companions in travel the region's manifold resources for settlement -- always insisting, we may be equally sure, that the opening of the territory to newcomers be conducted with all possible consideration for the various Indian tribes. As he wrote to the Methodist Mission Rooms on January 1, 1873, summing up the previous year's experiences: "I returned to Edmonton with Sandford Fleming, Esq. and party. . . . The clerical Secretary, whose addresses were models of Evangelical truth, often interrogated the writer on the subject of Missions. . . . Some of the notes taken by the Secretary, and occasionally read at the camp fire, were very suggestive."[13]

Knowing, then, on the evidence of McDougall himself that conversations, at least in general terms, took place between himself and Grant on the related issues of western settlement and western missions we can, I think, go on to assume with reasonable propriety that somewhere along the party's route of travel, the name of William Francis Butler entered their discussions. Butler, like Sandford Fleming and George Grant, had travelled across the plains carrying the authority of the Dominion government; like Fleming and Grant too, he had made part of his journey in the company of George McDougall. In the case of the Fleming expedition, McDougall acted as guide for nine hundred miles over the space of nearly a month; in Butler's, for only two days, covering the ground between Victoria and Edmonton. We should remember, however, that in addition to these two days of shared travel, the missionary had met Butler again on the latter's return from Rocky Mountain House. Being anxious to find out what had happened to his beloved Stoney Indians during the smallpox epidemic, McDougall made a point of inviting Butler to spend Christmas Eve at Victoria Mission.

The two men's acquaintance, therefore, although brief, sprang from mutual interest in what, to McDougall, had long appeared as issues of first-rank importance: the present condition of the Indian tribes, and their future relation to incoming white settlement. Nor can the missionary, on reading Butler's report some six months after the Commissioner's visit, have reasonably doubted that Butler understood his views on these issues. McDougall himself had been foremost among those whose representations had prompted Butler's appointment in the first place, having repeatedly memorialized the government on the need to restore order in the interior. Like Butler's report, McDougall's letters to the Canadian authorities called for improved communications, the establishment of a policing body of troops, and above all, treaties with the Indians. So urgent did he consider these measures, in fact, that he was prepared to leave his family at a time of growing unrest in the region in order to present his case in person to whatever government authority he might find in Red River. Of necessity, his appeal went to Donald Smith, the official representative of the Dominion government in Red River during Riel's administration; and Smith was both Butler's host for a period, and Archibald's adviser during his first months in office. It was on Donald Smith's advice, according to Edward McCourt, that Archibald appointed Butler to travel into the interior and collect information on conditions there, especially as they affected the government's plans to open the country for settlement.[14]

The evidence of their respective submissions to government, then -- George McDougall's letters to the east, and Butler's report to Archibald -- suggests that considerable common ground existed between the two men in their attitudes to the political future of the region. We also know, from the pages of Ocean to Ocean, that George Grant and George McDougall likewise discovered large areas of agreement in their viewpoint on western settlement. Yet Grant and McDougall had more than Butler's report, and the Secretary's notes, to act as topics of discussion during those evenings at the campfire in August 1872; they also had, if Pierre Berton is correct, a copy of The Great Lone Land.

Whether George McDougall, then or at any later period in his life, ever read the whole four hundred pages of The Great Lone Land may safely be left an open question. Given the intensity of his absorption in "the work for God and country," however, as well as the circumstance of his having previously met the author of the book, there seems little reason to suppose that he would have treated with indifference an opportunity to read what Butler had to say about missionary enterprise among the Indians. McDougall knew, of course, the prospensity of intelligent tourists to "mis-state" the conditions of life among the Indians; still, Butler's opportunity to observe the "real work" of western missionaries had been better than that of most British travellers to the region, while his report to Lieutenant-Governor Archibald showed ample evidence of discernment. It is doubtful, therefore, that McDougall would have been quite prepared to find what he did in the pages of The Great Lone Land -- to find, that is, that his one-time visitor and guest had written of him in terms which amounted to nothing less than a public libel on his whole being. So expertly camouflaged, however, was Butler's characterization in his narrative of a certain "western missionary," that few of the book's original readers, and probably fewer of its readers today, would be able to enter, as I now ask the reader of this study to enter, into the mind and feelings of George McDougall as he read the passages from Butler's book to which the remainder of this chapter will be devoted. To read Butler's remarks on western missions as George McDougall would have read them will require a conscious effort of the historical imagination; but without that effort, the writings of John McDougall a generation later become deprived of an essential dimension of their significance.

Readers of The Great Lone Land may recall that Butler, despite his preference for rapid forward movement, made an exception to his rule once he reached Rocky Mountain House. This, as events were to prove, was the western terminus of his travels that winter. In accordance with his instructions from Lieutenant-Governor Archibald, Butler had been hoping to secure a guide for further travel southward, in order to gather information about the Indian tribes of the border country. Since no guide was available, however, he contented himself with taking a well-earned rest, at the same garnering as much information as he could from residents of the fort. "Eight days passed pleasantly at the Mountain House," Butler wrote; "rambles by day into the neighbouring hills, stories of Indian life and prairie scenes told at the evening fire filled up the time, and it was near mid-December before I thought of moving my quarters" (GLL, 281). Much of what Butler learned during his stay was passed along to Archibald on his return to Fort Garry; but a considerable portion of it, principally those "stories of Indian life and prairie scenes told at the evening fire," served him well when he came to prepare his materials for publication. Since the anecdotes in question display Butler's customary tone of authority, it may be that many of The Great Lone Land's original readers accepted them as the account of an eye-witness. The informed modern reader, however, will recognise that virtually all of this material is the product of hearsay, information filtered in the first instance through the consciousness of his informants, and then through his own highly selective mind.

"During the days spent in the Mountain House," Butler recorded, at the end of an eleven-page essay on Indian life and manners (pages 277-288 of the Hurtig edition), "I enjoyed the society of the most enterprising and best informed missionary in the Indian countries -- M. la Combe." The passage continues:

> This gentleman, a native of Lower Canada, has devoted himself for more than twenty years to the Blackfeet and Crees of the far-West, sharing their sufferings, their hunts, their summer journeys, and their winter camps -- sharing even, unwillingly, their war forways and night assaults. The devotion which he has evinced towards these poor wild warriors has not been thrown away on them, and Père la Combe is the only man who can pass and repass from Blackfoot camp to Cree camp with perfect impunity when these long-lasting enemies are at war (GLL, 288).

Then follows a story giving evidence of Lacombe's hazardous life among the tribes, with Butler concluding, "This battle served not a little to increase the reputation in which the missionary was held as a 'great medicine-man.' The Blackfeet ascribed to his 'medicine' what was really due to his pluck; and the Crees, when they learnt that he had been with their enemies during the fight, at once found in that fact a satisfactory explanation for the want of courage they had displayed" (GLL, 290).

If the reputation of Father Albert Lacombe was, as Butler claims here, substantially increased among the Indian tribes of the west by this particular exhibition of valour, it was certainly done no harm among the English-language reading public of the time by Butler's account of the episode in his best-selling book. The legend of Father Lacombe owes much to The Great Lone Land. Butler, however, was far from being the first to make public his high estimate of this remarkable missionary priest. As early as 1856, readers of Wesleyan Missionary Notices in Canada were introduced to Lacombe through a letter from the Wesleyan Missionary at Edmonton, the Englishman Thomas Woolsey. "Shortly after my arrival," Woolsey noted, "the Rev. Mr. Lacombe (Romanist) arrived from St. Ann's, for goods. This ecclesiastic presented a decided contrast to many of the Romish clergy, being most courteous and urbane in his general deportment. There is a frankness and freedom about him that makes one lament that such a person should stand connected with such a system."[15]

Nor was Lacombe's growing reputation as an Indian missionary confined to Canada, as Butler was well aware. Having counted on "the English reader" to remember, for example, the name of Louis Battenotte in connection with the Milton and Cheadle expedition, he probably also expected some recollection of these paragraphs, from Northwest Passage By Land, as Cheadle described events of May 1863:

> At daylight next morning [we] rode over with Baptiste to St. Alban's [i.e. St. Albert]. We found a little colony of some twenty houses, built on the rising ground. . . . The worthy father, M. Lacome, was standing in front of his dwelling as we came up, and we at once introduced ourselves. . . . He welcomed us very cordially. . . .
>
> Père Lacome was an exceedingly intelligent man, and we found his society very agreeable. Although a French Canadian, he spoke English very fluently, and his knowledge of the Cree language was acknowledged by the half-breed to be superior to his own. . . . We strolled round the settlement in company with our host. He showed us several very respectable farms, with rich corn-fields, large bands of horses, and herds of fat cattle. He had devoted himself to the work of improving the

> condition of his flock. . . . Altogether this little settlement was the most flourishing community we had seen since leaving Red River, and it must be confessed that the Romish priests far excel their Protestant brethren in missionary enterprise and influence. They have established stations at Isle à La Crosse, St. Alban's, St. Ann's, and other places, far out in the wilds, undeterred by danger or hardship, and gathering half-breeds and Indians around them, have taught with considerable success the elements of civilisation as well as religion; while the latter [*i.e.* the Protestants] remain inert, enjoying the ease and comfort of the Red River Settlement, or at most make the occasional summer's visit to some of the nearest posts.[16]

We know, too, that other English travellers besides Milton and Cheadle came away from their sporting expeditions in Rupert's Land impressed by Lacombe's charm and accomplishments. There was, for example, the Earl of Southesk's diary entry for August 19, 1859 (later published in *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*) describing how he had had "the pleasure of dining with Pères Lacome and Le Frain at the Roman Catholic mission-house -- agreeable men and perfect gentlemen." To this Southesk added, "What an advantage Rome has in this respect -- Protestants constantly send vulgar, underbred folk to supply their missions, Rome sends polished, highly-educated gentlemen."[17]

Cheadle's remark in his narrative regarding "the occasional summer's visit" which Protestant missionaries were known to have made to the interior, while historically inaccurate in its broader implications, had some founding in fact. During the summer preceding Cheadle's visit to St. Albert, George McDougall had toured the interior region for the first time, leaving behind him his son John to winter over with the resident Methodist missionary, Thomas Woolsey. Throughout the winter of 1862-3, Milton and Cheadle shared a cabin just west of Carlton, while Woolsey and the younger McDougall played host to a certain Mr. O'B. Cheadle's party, augmented by Mr. O'B, departed for the mountains just as work on the permanent mission at Victoria was begun.

By the time of Butler's inspection of the region, then, in November and December of 1870, there were two thriving missions in the Edmonton area: Lacombe's populous and productive mission at St. Albert, and McDougall's much smaller community at Victoria, some ninety miles to the east. It was the two days' journey by horseback separating Victoria mission from the settlement at Edmonton which Butler and McDougall travelled in company together -- an occurrence that Butler duly noted in The Great Lone Land:

> As we journeyed on towards Edmonton the country maintained its rich and beautiful appearance, and the weather continued fine and mild. Everywhere nature had written in unmistakable characters the story of the fertility of the soil over which we rode -- everywhere the eye looked upon panoramas filled with the beauty of lake and winding river, and grassy slope and undulating woodland. The whole face of the country was indeed one vast park. For two days we passed through this beautiful land, and on the evening of the 26th November drew near to Edmonton. My party had been increased by the presence of two gentlemen from Victoria -- a Wesleyan minister and the Hudson Bay official in charge of the Company's post at that place. Both of these gentlemen had resided long in the Upper Saskatchewan, and were intimately acquainted with the tribes who inhabit the vast territory from the Rocky Mountains to Carlton House (GLL, 256-7).[18]

As was his frequent practice in his narrative, Butler attached names to neither of his two knowledgeable companions from Victoria; they were, simply, "a Wesleyan minister," and "the Hudson Bay official in charge of the Company's post at that place."

Furthermore, when he described his return visit to Victoria, Butler chose to maintain this policy of reticence, referring three more times to "the missionary" without offering any further identification of the individual in question, except by inference. It being a characteristic trait of Butler's conduct of his narrative, however, that the reader is often obliged to infer what the narrator finds too delicate to frame in direct statement, it can sometimes be an illuminating experience to fill in the blanks of Butler's prose; and this is indeed the case with Butler's description of Christmas at Victoria in the winter of 1870. For the convenience of the reader, I give this episode in full as it appears on pages 302-5 of The Great Lone Land:

> As at Edmonton so in the fort at Victoria the small-pox had again broken out; in spite of cold and frost the infection still lurked in many places, and in none more fatally than in this little settlement where, during the autumn, it had wrought so much havoc among the scanty community. In this distant settlement I spent the few days of Christmas; the weather had become suddenly milder, although the thermometer still stood below zero.
>
> Small-pox had not been the only evil from which Victoria had suffered during the year which was about to close; the Sircies had made many raids upon it during the summer, stealing down the sheltering banks of a small creek which entered the Saskatchewan at the opposite side, and then swimming the broad river during the night and lying hidden at day in the high corn-fields of the mission. Incredible though it may appear, they continued this practice at a time when they were being swept away by the small-pox; their bodies were found in one instance dead upon the bank of the river they had crossed by swimming when the fever of the disease had been at its height. Those who live their lives quietly at home, who sleep in beds, and lay up when sickness comes upon them, know but little of what the human frame is capable of enduring if put to the test. With us, to be ill is to lie down; not so with the Indian; he is never ill with the casual illnesses of our civilization: when he lies down it is to sleep for a few hours, or -- for ever. Thus these Sircies had literally kept the war-trail till they died. When the corn-fields were being cut around the mission, the reapers found unmistakable traces of how these wild men had kept the field undaunted by disease. Long black hair was found where it had fallen from the head of some brave in the lairs from which he had watched the

horses of his enemies; the ruling passion had been strong in death. In the end, the much-coveted horses were carried off by the few survivors, and the mission had to bewail the loss of some of its best steeds. One, a mare belonging to the missionary himself, had returned to her home after an absence of a few days, but she carried in her flank a couple of Sircie arrows. She had broken away from the band, and the braves had sent their arrows after her in an attempt to kill what they could not keep. To add to the misfortunes of the settlement, the buffalo were far out in the great plains, so between disease, war, and famine, Victoria had had a hard time of it.

In the farmyard of the mission-house there lay a curious block of metal of immense weight; it was rugged, deeply indented, and polished on the outer edges of the indentations by the wear and friction of many years. Its history was a curious one. Longer than any man could say, it had lain on the summit of a hill far out in the southern prairies. It had been a medicine-stone of surpassing virtue among the Indians over a vast territory. No tribe or portion of a tribe would pass in the vicinity without paying a visit to this great medicine: it was said to be increasing yearly in weight. Old men remembered having heard old men say that they had once lifted it. And it was no wonder that this metallic stone should be a Manito-stone and an object of intense veneration to the Indian; it had come down from heaven; it did not belong to the earth, but had descended out of the sky; it was, in fact, an aerolite. Not very long before my visit this curious stone had been removed from the hill upon which it had so long rested and brought to the Mission of Victoria by some person from that place. When the Indians found that it had been taken away, they were loud in the expression of their regret. The old medicine-men declared that its removal would lead to great misfortunes, and that war, disease, and dearth of buffalo would afflict the tribes of the Saskatchewan. This was not a prophecy made after the occurrence of the plague of small-pox, for in a magazine published by the Wesleyan Society in Canada there appears a letter from the missionary, setting forth the predictions of the medicine-men a year prior to my visit. The letter concludes with an expression of thanks that their evil prognostications had not been attended with success. But a few months later brought all the three evils upon the Indians; and never, probably, since the first trader had reached the country had so many afflictions of war, famine, and plague fallen upon the Crees and the Blackfeet as during the year which succeeded the useless removal of their Manito-stone from the lone hill-top upon which the skies had cast it.

I spent the evening of Christmas Day in the house of the missionary. Two of his daughters sang very sweetly to the music of a small melodian. Both song and strain were sad --

> sadder, perhaps, than the words or music could make them; for the recollection of the two absent ones, whose newly-made graves, covered with their first snow, lay close outside, mingled with the hymn and deepened the melancholy of the music.

It is probably best to begin analysis of this passage by returning to the matter of "the missionary's" identity. A Protestant missionary, beyond doubt, being possessed of a wife and family; furthermore, a Wesleyan, as any careful reader would know from the reference to "a letter from the missionary" in the pages of "a magazine published by the Wesleyan Society in Canada." No reader of this passage, however, who also followed closely the magazine in question (this being, of course, Wesleyan Missionary Notices) would have been in any uncertainty as to the name of Butler's host. If George Millward McDougall was "well known . . . by reputation" to G. M. Grant as "a faithful minister, and an intelligent observer of Indian character," as Grant described him in Ocean to Ocean, he was similarly well known to hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the Methodist faithful in Canada during the 1860's and '70's. Many of their number, no doubt, knew of him only through his letters to the church papers, while others would have remembered seeing and hearing him during his speaking tour of Ontario in 1867-8. Readers such as these, therefore, would not have needed Butler to tell them that Victoria on the Saskatchewan was a Methodist mission station; nor that the missionary whose letters they regularly read in the magazine published by the Wesleyan Society in Canada bore the name of George McDougall.

This is one point of historical fact, then, on which a certain segment of Butler's original reading public -- a small segment, without question, but not thereby completely insignificant -- could, from knowledge of western conditions culled from other sources, have mentally filled out Butler's allusive phrases. There were others as well. For example, had there not been three, rather than two, "absent ones" that Christmas at Victoria? One of those missing from the McDougall family circle was, to be sure, an adopted Indian girl; still, as McDougall had written, "we were all much attached to Anna." Then, too, it might be thought that the phrases, "a few months later," and "the year which succeeded," in reference to the removal of the Manito stone, rather blurred the actual interval of time between the stone's removal in 1866 and Butler's visit in 1870. Furthermore, had the removal of the stone itself been as utterly without purpose as Butler's adjective "useless" implies? Or had there been reasons for its transfer to the mission farm-yard, reasons of a kind well known to the Protestant mission brethren of the time, if not immediately evident to a visitor?

To raise such questions, however, is once again to duplicate the responses of the literal-minded. Questions bearing on statements of historical fact in Butler's book, as questions like these do bear, entirely miss the point of the writer's intentions in this episode: intentions which emerge clearly in the final two paragraphs of the passage quoted above. These are the paragraphs dealing in turn with the Manito stone's removal, and with the mission family on Christmas Eve; and it is to these paragraphs in particular that I wish to return.

The first of the two paragraphs in question is, the reader might note, almost completely self-contained: a fully-rounded anecdote complete with build-up, climax and resolution. The scene for the anecdote is set by the final sentence of the preceding paragraph, which reads, "To add to the misfortunes of the settlement, the buffalo were far out into the great plains; so between disease, war, and famine, Victoria had had a hard time of it." The anecdote proper then follows. It begins on a casual note, as the writer remarks on a feature of the settlement's physical appearance ("In the farmyard of the mission-house there lay a curious block of metal. . . .") From this observation springs a description of the "curious block," and a record of its "curious history": altogether a "curious stone," as the writer goes on to say. It is a phenomenon, then, which is "strange, surprising, odd," in the meanings for the word "curious" which are given in the OED. Strange, surprising, odd -- but not trivial: for Butler uses the word here as a tool of calculated irony, to underscore the full magnitude of the tragedy represented to him by the seemingly-innocuous stone which graces the farm-yard of the mission house.

The plot of this tragedy is briefly told. It is one which hinges on a chain of inspired prophecies and divine retribution. Throughout the memory of men, a sacred stone lies on a hill-side, "an object of intense veneration to the Indian." The stone is then removed from its original setting, and taken to the mission at Victoria. As a consequence, the Indians foretell disaster for the entire region. "The missionary," however, has the temerity to disbelieve the prophecies of the medicine-men: to commit to print, even, his thanksgiving that "their evil prognostications had not been attended with success." How humbling to the properly reverent mind, then, the events of "a few months later," when suffering of unparalleled intensity is suddenly visited on the Indian tribes.

Hubris, as no nineteenth-century reader needed openly to be reminded, was the sin for which God punished Satan; it is the sin abhorrent above all others to the devout Christian. Clearly, in Butler's rendering of events, a case of human *hubris* meeting its just and meet reward from heaven; but an unorthodox interpretation of Christian theology all the same: for the Christian God of Scripture and tradition is conspicuously absent from the drama as Butler presents it. Instead, it is an angry, vengeful Manito who here presides and intervenes, chastizing Cree and Blackfoot alike for the actions of an impious mortal.

Not on the Indians alone, however, has the Manito's anger fallen; they, after all, have been innocent victims of the scourge. The reader learns, too, how war, famine and plague have also visited the very individuals whose defiance of the conjurors has triggered the Manito's revenge. Once again, inference must perforce be the reader's tool in dealing with this passage, since direct statement is lacking; nonetheless, Butler's implication is made perfectly clear in the paragraph to follow. For coming immediately after the anecdote of the Manito stone, Butler presents a vignette of the bereaved mission family, prevented by mourning from celebrating Christmas in the proper spirit of joy and thanksgiving. In exactly the manner of the "poor Blackie" episode, the vignette calls for two related emotional responses from the reader. The first is pity for the suffering victim, in this case, the sorrowing missionary of Victoria and his family. The second is empathy for the narrator, the tender-hearted individual who can show such unmistakable fineness of feeling in the presence of their suffering, considering that he knows it to be, in the present instance, no less than deserved.

The reader of this study may be inclined to wonder, at this point, whether such subtlety of analysis is appropriate to the reconstruction, after more than a hundred years have elapsed, of either individual or group responses to a given publication. Some few of Butler's original English readers, we may think, could have read between the paragraphs in the manner suggested here; a handful, too, of careful and highly-literate readers in Canada and the United States; but any significant number of individuals whose chief fare in the reading line was the Bible and Wesleyan Missionary Notices? Or, more to the point, a poorly-educated missionary in Edmonton, untrained to the identification of means and methods in the construction of effective writing? For there can be no question of the economy and expertise of Butler's mode of presenting the inherent drama of the situation he perceived at Victoria Mission in the winter of 1870; while there is, in the writings of George McDougall, little evidence of anything remotely approaching the same sophistication of literary awareness.

In the absence, therefore, of any documentary record of McDougall's actual thoughts and feelings when he read these paragraphs in The Great Lone Land, we are left with probabilities; and in gauging those probabilities, we do well to keep in mind the contrast between Butler's version of Victoria's trials, in the paragraphs quoted above, and McDougall's own earnest enquiry into the same troubling question, written on the first day of April 1871 and published in the Wesleyan church papers that fall. McDougall, it will be recalled, there explained the paradox of God's mercy to the Indians by saying that He was offering them pestilence in preference to the sword. Whether, given the choice, readers of the 1870's would have been better advised to prefer McDougall's explanation to Butler's, considered as objective history, or vice versa, is not a relevant consideration. What is important to remember is the fact of the radical divergence between their respective versions of the same events; and, stemming from this divergence, the consequent likelihood that George McDougall, reflecting on Butler's words, would have done so with growing feelings of affront.

These, then, are two segments from The Great Lone Land -- first, the interlude at Rocky Mountain House, where Butler spent eight days with what he calls "the most enterprising and best-informed missionary in the Indian countries -- M. la Combe," and then the passage dealing with Christmas at Victoria -- which, whatever the nature of George McDougall's actual response, demonstrably contain grounds for some degree of objection on his part. There is a third segment, however, which for broadly similar reasons also requires the reader's close attention; and if I now bring this passage forward for comment out of sequence, as it were, in terms of its order of appearance in The Great Lone Land, I do so because I see its implications as far outweighing in importance, for the purposes of the materials under study in this dissertation, either of the two episodes already remarked on. Again for the convenience of the reader, the passage is quoted below in full; it occupies pages 261-2 of the Hurtig edition, and it takes the form of a single long paragraph:

> A few miles north-west of Edmonton a settlement composed exclusively of French half-breeds is situated on the shores of a rather extensive lake which bears the name of Grand Lac, or St. Albert. This settlement is presided over by a mission of French Roman Catholic clergymen of the order of Oblates, headed by a bishop of the same order and nationality. It is a curious contrast to find in this distant and strange land men of culture and high mental excellence devoting their lives to the task of civilizing the wild Indians of the forest and the prairie -- going far in advance of the settler, whose advent they have but too much cause to dread. I care not what may the form of belief which the on-looker may hold -- whether it be in unison or in antagonism with that faith preached by these men; but he is only a poor semblance of a man who can behold such a sight through the narrow glass of sectarian feeling and see in it nothing but the self-interested labour of persons holding opinions foreign to his own. He who has travelled through the vast colonial empire of Britain -- that empire which covers one third of the entire habitable surface of the globe and probably half of the lone lands of the world -- must often have met with men dwelling in the midst of wild, savage people whom they tended with a strange and mother-like devotion. If you asked who was this stranger who dwelt thus among wild men in these long places, you were told he was the French missionary; and if you sought him in his lonely hut, you found ever the same surroundings, the same simple evidences of a faith which seemed more than human. I do not speak from hearsay or book-knowledge. I have myself witnessed the scenes I now try to recall. And it has ever been the same, East and West, far in advance of trader or merchant, of sailor or soldier, has gone this dark-haired, fragile man, whose earliest memories are thick with sunny scenes by bank of Loire or vine-clad slope of Rhone or Garonne, and whose vision in this life, at least, is never destined to rest again upon these oft-remembered places. Glancing through

> a pamphlet one day at Edmonton, a pamphlet which recorded the progress of a Canadian Wesleyan Missionary Society, I read the following extract from the letter of a Western missionary: -- "These representatives of the Man of Sin, these priests, are hard-workers; summer and winter they follow the camps, suffering great privations. They are indefatigable in their efforts to make converts. But their converts," he adds, "have never heard of the Holy Ghost." "The man of sin" -- which of us is without it? To these French missionaries at Grand Lac I was the bearer of terrible tidings. I carried to them the story of Sedan, the overwhelming rush of armed Germany into the heart of France -- the closing of the high-schooled hordes of Teuton savagery around Paris; all that was hard home news to hear. Fate had leant heavily upon their little congregation; out of 900 souls more than 300 had perished of small-pox up to the date of my arrival, and others were still sick in the huts along the lake. Well might the bishop and his priests bow their heads in the midst of such manifold tribulations of death and disaster.

Let us begin with the paragraph's subject, which is the French missionary priest, considered as a type: "this dark-haired, fragile man," in his typical manifestation; or, as Butler encountered the actual representatives of the type at St. Albert, "men of culture and high mental excellence devoting their lives to the task of civilizing the wild Indians of the forest and the prairie." The positive attributes of the French missionary are specified in detail: his culture, mental excellence, daring and self-sacrifice; his lifelong attachment, moreover, to his homeland across the sea. All this, of course, we recognize to be entirely appropriate from the pen of one who has already put on record his fleeting impulse to "offer to France in the moment of her bitter adversity the sword and service of even one sympathizing friend" (GLL, 195). Yet we also recognize, if we are reading with attention, that there is a purpose behind Butler's portrait of missionary devotion, a challenge being taken up in the manner of a gallant champion of impugned virtue. "I care not," Butler wrote, in explicit repudiation of any opinion to the contrary -- "I care not what may be the form of belief which the on-looker may hold -- whether it be in unison or in antagonism with that faith preached by these men, but he is only a poor semblance of a man who can behold such a sight through the narrow glass of sectarian feeling, and see in it nothing but the self-interested labour of persons holding opinions foreign to his own."

The repudiation is entirely general, the grounds for its statement being left momentarily in abeyance as Butler continues his tribute to the French missionary priest, whose story, like that of the Indians, has been "ever the same, East and West." But the provocation for this ~~extended defense~~ of the priests finally makes its appearance, in Butler's usual tactful manner. No overt statement of contradiction at this point in the paragraph; just a passing allusion, casually introduced, to some one individual who is, regrettably, unable to see the efforts of the priests with all the tolerance and understanding that Butler could have wished. "Glancing through a pamphlet one day at Edmonton . . .": and it is with this phrase that the exact object of the entire paragraph stands revealed as Butler's reply to the letter which he has found in the pamphlet, written by "a Western missionary." Butler quotes the missionary's words more or less verbatim, and then concludes, more in sorrow than in anger, "'The man of sin' -- which of us is without it?" Beyond this, no further remark; for he evidently assumes that the words of the missionary are damning enough in themselves. Besides, he has already put on record his opinion of the letter's author in the earlier part of the paragraph, having written there that "he . . . who can behold such a sight through the narrow glass of sectarian feeling" is "only a poor semblance of a man."

Because Butler does not name the source of the sectarian sentiments he quotes, the Western missionary's identity remains, for the majority of Butler's readers (and particularly his English readers) shrouded in decent obscurity. Yet it is worth remembering that those closest, in time and in location, to the events which Butler describes in The Great Lone Land would have been able to make the necessary connections with scarcely a moment's hesitation: Canadian readers, in particular, who would have known precisely who it was that Butler meant by the phrase, "a poor semblance of a man." Whether those Canadian readers numbered in the thousands, or the hundreds, or merely in the dozens, does not materially affect the case. The words still stood, publicly displayed in one of the period's best-selling books, and representing Butler's considered judgment on the character of one of their most highly-respected countrymen.

"Poor Canada!" Butler wrote, in an early chapter of The Great Lone Land:

> Poor Canada! when one looks at you along the immense length of your noble river-boundary, how vividly become apparent the evils under which your youth has grown to manhood! Looked at from home by every succeeding colonial minister through the particular whig, or tory spectacles of his party, subject to violent and radical alterations of policy because of some party vote in a Legislative Assembly 3000 miles from your nearest coast-line, your own politicians, for years, too

> timid to grasp the limit of your possible future, parties every where in your provinces, and of every kind, except a national party; no breadth, no depth, no earnest striving to make you great amongst the nations, each one for himself and no one for the country; men fighting for a sect, for a province, for a nationality, but no one for the nation. . . . Poor Canada! (GLL, 33-4)

If to partake of the kind of narrow sectarian feeling which unquestionably marks the letters of George McDougall were indeed to display "no breadth, no depth, no earnest striving to make you great," then well might Butler think with pity over the Canadians' fate. "Each one for himself and no one for the country; men fighting for a sect, for a province, for a nationality, but no one for the nation." What hope, then, for such a people to arrive at "the strength and manhood which race and climate and tradition would assign to it," even should development take place in "this great link in the chain of such a future nationality"? Poor Canada indeed; and poor George McDougall, confronted with Butler's deft assassination of his character, and prevented, by the evidence of his own words, from giving him the lie.

VIII

DEEDS, NOT WORDS

George Grant was right: by the summer of 1872 it was becoming evident even to the transient observer that the Hudson's Bay Company was no longer "the only power in this 'Great Lone Land.'" What formerly had belonged to England now belonged to Canada, and even outside the boundaries of the diminutive province of Manitoba there were patent reminders of the fact of the Transfer. Every succeeding year brought fresh proofs of the Dominion government's intention to convert No Man's Land into Every Man's Land -- commissioners to treat with the Indians, more survey parties, and, most reassuring of all, to travellers and permanent residents alike, a force of mounted police stationed at strategic locations throughout the interior. Civil law was coming forward with its own mediators, leaving the Methodist missionaries free to concentrate on mission expansion.

To the Chairman of the Saskatchewan District of Methodist missions, George McDougall, the early years of the 1870's were to be ones of increasing satisfaction. The ordination of his eldest son enabled the church to supply a long-felt deficiency in its manpower, an experienced worker to undertake a mission to the Blackfoot and Piegan tribes of the southern plains, where the Catholic priests had heretofore held the field. These same years, too, saw the stations at Victoria, Edmonton, Whitefish Lake and Pigeon Lake consolidated under new recruits from the east. The spreading of Gospel light in the plains and parkland region emerged from the major disabilities of its earliest years and began to take on the dimensions of a full-scale enterprise.

By 1874, George McDougall thought the time had come to travel the country once more in the interests of missions. The constant pressures of his post, too, were beginning to tell on him. "For the first time," he wrote to Enoch Wood early in 1874, "I am nearly used up" (GMM, 194). McDougall applied for, and received, a year's leave of absence in order to travel east with his wife. The supposed holiday, however, turned out to be so crammed with speeches and appointments that he returned to the mission at Edmonton, in the fall of 1875, in greater need of rest than when he had left. He was fifty-five years old, to all appearances in excellent physical condition, but admittedly exhausted by his year in civilization. Four months later he was dead. Late in January 1876, the elder missionary became separated from a buffalo-hunting party on the plains near Morley. Nearly two weeks intervened before searchers found his frozen body.

When news of McDougall's death reached eastern Canada, there were many public tributes to the man and his work to testify to the high esteem in which Canadians in all provinces held the late Chairman of the Saskatchewan District. Special editorials appeared in the major church papers, while Protestant ministers -- G. M. Grant among them -- preached memorial sermons in McDougall's honour. Two years later, Grant was to make an additional gesture of his respect and affection for his one-time companion in travel. A passage from the 1873 edition of Ocean to Ocean, on pages 155-6, was amended to read: "Mr. McDougal in particular was invaluable. In every difficulty we called upon him and he never failed us. He would come up with his uniform sober pleasant look, take in the bearings of the whole case, and decide promptly what was to be done. He was our deus ex machina. Dear old fellow traveller! how often you are in our thoughts! Your memory is green in the heart of every one who ever travelled with you."[1]

Despite the removal of the mainspring of the Methodist mission enterprise in the interior, the work for God and country continued unabated in the decades to follow. George McDougall had taken care to have a highly competent replacement ready to step into his shoes. Throughout the 1870's and '80's John McDougall saw to it that the work his father had initiated continued without a break, proceeding with the orphanage and school for Indian children at Morley, overseeing the physical maintenance of the mission stations, and keeping up his father's active recruitment program for more teachers and ordained staff.

The new Chairman of the Saskatchewan District was seldom in one place for long during these decades. When he wasn't travelling from one western mission to another, he was stumping the eastern provinces as his father had done before him, making speeches advertising the west, and calling for additional labourers in God's vineyard. Unlike his father, however, John McDougall did not confine his appeals to speeches from the lecture platform, and letters to the editors of the church papers. Reaching prominence in the Northwest's affairs during a later phase in the region's development, he was able -- and anxious -- to reach a wider audience. Thus it was that, beginning in the early 1880's and continuing until his death in 1917, John McDougall became one of the most widely published Canadians of his time.

We can catch a glimpse of the circumstances behind the younger missionary's increasing prominence in the public life of the nation from a biography by John Maclean, McDougall of Alberta, a book which, although first appearing as long ago as 1927, nonetheless remains the most complete published source of information on John McDougall's career as a whole. Wrote Maclean:

> Not least among the nation builders of Western Canada was John McDougall, who lived and suffered, talked and wrote with but one passion, the Gospel of Christ and the great North-West. Up and down the land, from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic coast, he travelled incessantly, unhasting, unresting, relating stories of adventure and describing the vast resources of the wonderland of the West, which thrilled the hearts of young and old. His sermons were lectures on mission work among the native tribes, descriptions of the untrodden trails and of the countless acres of virgin prairie, and appeals for settlers, with a text from the Bible to endorse his orthodoxy. His lectures were on the same theme without a Scripture text! We have listened to him in pulpit and on platform, in city churches and rural schoolhouses, before cultured audiences and the rustic few, and it was the same story with a different setting, suitable for the place and the occasion.
>
> The spoken word, however, was insufficient to satisfy his burning passion, and he became, through force of circumstances, a newspaper correspondent, working without any compensation,

> and seeking no favour and courting no popularity. When a disgruntled tenderfoot rushed into the columns of the local newspaper with a diatribe against the country, or a distinguished but critical tourist found space in the pages of a magazine, our defender of the West pounced upon him, and hurled thunderbolts against ignorance and hasty observations. Among the hundreds of articles the greatest number relate to the Indians, and the suitability of the country for settlement. He seemed in his later years to walk with a pen in his hand. There are articles on the prevention of tuberculosis among human beings; Alberta as a stock-raising district; Calgary as a suitable place for large stockyards; war-time letters on recruiting; loving and tender appreciations of the Honourable David Laird, of Chief Factor Belanger, and of Stanley Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company, who lost their lives by drowning at Sea Falls on the Nelson River, and other on many different topics.[2]

According to J. E. Nix, "no complete bibliography of John McDougall's writings has yet been made," although if Maclean is to be believed, the list would run to "hundreds" of items (OGW, 8).

For the most part, these writings were fugitive productions, the swiftly struck-off pronouncements of a man seldom at rest and, by his own admission, with little leisure for either reading or writing. They appeared in the form of magazine and newspaper articles, in numerous letters to the editor, and as printed speeches, published in pamphlet form either for circulation individually or as contributions to the "Compilations from Authorities" which played their part in the settlement promotions of the late nineteenth century. What changed John McDougall's status from mere "newspaper correspondent" to "author," however, was a volume of biography, George Millward McDougall: Pioneer, Patriot and Missionary. McDougall finished the last page of this book on April 6, 1888, at his home at Morley, and then returned to his usual summer travels across the plains, leaving the publication of his manuscript in the capable hands of Alexander Sutherland at the Methodist Mission Rooms in Toronto. The biography of the elder missionary met with a gratifying response from Canadian readers, a second edition being called for in 1902: a fact which suggests that John was not far wrong when he wrote, in summing up his father's life, "His work is finished, but not forgotten" (*GMM*, 216).

Following up this first venture into authorship, McDougall next turned autobiographer, writing the five books of reminiscences by which he consolidated his reputation with the turn-of-the-century Canadian reading public. These were: *Forest, Lake and Prairie: Twenty Years of Frontier Life in Western Canada, 1842-62* (1895); *Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe: Pioneering on the Saskatchewan in the Sixties* (1896); *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie: Stirring Scenes of Life in the Canadian Northwest* (1898); *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion: Life and Adventure in the Far West of Canada* (1903); and *On Western Trails in the Early Seventies: Frontier Life in the Canadian North-west* (1911). A sixth unfinished manuscript has been edited by J. E. Nix and published by the Glenbow Alberta Institute in 1970, under the title *Opening the Great West*. Finally, there is a volume of fiction which McDougall had printed in 1908, *Wa-pee Moostooch*.[3]

From this list, it is evident that John McDougall went to no little trouble to see that neither he nor his father would be forgotten. A biography, six books of autobiographical record, and a work of fiction running to more than three hundred pages comprise his major publications in English -- all these in addition to several books or parts of books in Cree (a revised grammar, and translations of hymns and books in the Bible), and a continuing stream of more ephemeral publications in English over a thirty year period. His reward, three generations later, is one brief allusion in The Literary History of Canada (McDougall's memoirs, the revised edition of 1976 informs present-day readers, "rank high" in the category of Religious and Theological Writings), and virtual oblivion in the works of our most influential scholarly and popular historians: this despite the younger missionary's almost unparalleled opportunity to stand as first-hand witness to the major developments of the entire settlement period, from 1860 to 1917. The books themselves have not disappeared; in the University of Alberta library system, for example, all the titles mentioned above circulate from the open stacks, with the single exception of On Western Trails, available only in Special Collections; while Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie has been reprinted by Coles.[4] What has been effaced, apparently, is John McDougall's standing as a man whose books need to be read and taken into serious account.

To be specific: G. F. Stanley, in The Birth of Western Canada, mentions (and no more than mentions) the name of John McDougall twice, and George McDougall once, in his 400-page history of the two rebellions. None of these allusions required Stanley to be familiar with the memoirs, and no reference to any published work by McDougall is to be found in the notes. Nor do any of the history-writing Mortons make even minimal use of McDougall's books for their major works. There is no listing for John McDougall in the index or bibliography of A. S. Morton's The History of The Canadian West to 1870; the same is true of W. L. Morton's Manitoba; A History and Desmond Morton's The Last War Drum. John McDougall's name does appear, once, in W. L. Morton's notes to his edition of Alexander Begg's Red River Journal -- but the citation is erroneous.[5] Four of the west's most reputable scholarly writers, then: and John McDougall's books might as well never have seen the light of day.

In the realm of history for the non-academic reading public, moreover, the materials under discussion here fare only slightly better, although here generalization becomes more difficult because of the looser standards of exactitude traditionally tolerated in this genre of historical reconstruction. It is hard to know, for example, how much weight one should place on a little volume written for the schools by Hugh Maclean, entitled Man of Steel: The Story of Sir Sandford Fleming (1969), large parts of which are cribbed more or less directly from Burpee's biography of 1915, and George Grant's Ocean to Ocean. At a time when there was only one well-known Methodist missionary in the Saskatchewan district by the name of McDougall, it was perhaps not unnatural for Grant to write throughout his travel narrative of "Mr. McDougal," with no first name supplied. Accordingly, Canadian school-children can learn from Hugh Maclean that the traveller who drove up to the camp of the Sandford Fleming expedition on the evening of August 2, 1872 was "the Rev. John McDougall, pioneer missionary who had crossed the plains nine times and was now going westward once more."[6] Were these children ever to be given an opportunity to read John McDougall's memoirs they would discover that John was in fact several hundred miles away at the time, heading in exactly the opposite direction.[7]

In the books of Douglas Hill and James G. MacGregor we have historical writing which more nearly approximates the standard fare of the clerisy in Canada. Hill, whose bibliography includes George Millward McDougall and On Western Trails as source materials, wrote that John McDougall became "one of the west's best-loved missionaries and a central figure in the settlement of Alberta," adding that both father and son "held the respect and trust of both Blackfoot and Crees, moving freely among them even when they were at war."[8] In his 1972 History of Alberta, J. G. MacGregor was not inclined to be so generous to the two Methodist missionaries, indicating there the sympathies which would lead to his biography of Albert Lacombe in 1976:

> Like Father Lacombe, the two McDougalls were to leave their mark on Alberta. George, who lost his life in a blizzard, was perhaps the greater man, but because of John McDougall's half-century of devotion to the cause he espoused and his overweening egotism, he became one of the West's great men. Never a shrinking violet, as shown by his autobiographical books, his constant acknowledgement of his manifest fitness ran hand in hand with his biting criticism of the Lord's enemies. Amongst these he numbered his rival in the race for converts, Father Lacombe, whose long sojourn in the prairies, self-sacrifice and final recognition as one of the West's gigantic figures paralleled his own. For the West, like the rest of the Christian world of the time, was steeped in religious bigotry and bitter intolerance. Nevertheless, during its crucial era what has been called McDougall's muscular Christianity, coupled with his vigour as a frontiersman, served the West well.[9]

It is doubtful, however, whether Douglas Hill and J. G. MacGregor combined wield quite the influence on the creation of near-mythology in this country that has fallen into the hands of Pierre Berton since the publication (and then the televised serialization, not to mention the illustrated paperback version) of The Great Railway. And I would argue that it is precisely here that the neglect of John McDougall's memoirs by professional historians has had its most unfortunate effects. For in Berton's widely-read volumes on the critical years in western development, volumes which must be admitted to show more than cursory regard for the work of Canadian scholars, as well as for the documentary sources, the work and personalities of George and John McDougall are all but invisible -- an omission that Berton, with his acute sense of the impact which individuals can have on history, would undoubtedly be the first to regret were he once acquainted with John McDougall's books.

In the entire two volumes of The Great Railway, George McDougall is mentioned only once, that once being primarily so that Berton may dramatize the severity of the climate on the plains. "The savage blizzards of winter could fell the hardiest, as they did the respected prairie missionary George McDougall in 1876," Berton wrote on page 39 of The National Dream, while still setting the scene for the saga to follow. The illustration is convenient and dramatic, but it does not happen to be a known fact. John's several published accounts of his father's death stress the probability that George McDougall died, of heart failure or other natural causes, under routine winter weather conditions, the blizzard which hampered search efforts not having sprung up for a day and a half after the elder missionary's disappearance only a few miles from camp. The case of John McDougall's role in Berton's work, meanwhile, is complicated by errors in the compilation of the indexes, the Edmonton trader John A. McDougall providing a ready opportunity for confusion. It takes cross-reference of the indexes with the text to establish the fact there is, as well, only one reference to the Methodist missionary John McDougall in the two volumes of Berton's history, this reference being to an anecdote culled from an unpublished privately-held manuscript.[10] No publications by John McDougall appear in Berton's bibliography.

Although I would not wish to represent my acquaintance with western Canadian historiography as being anything near exhaustive, I know of only two books by writers associated with Canadian universities which make extensive use of John McDougall's writings. One is Gilbert Roe's The North American Buffalo, a book which is not so much a history as a historian's tool, being a compendium of all the references Roe had found, over fifteen industrious years, to the habits of the buffalo as recorded by first-hand witnesses to developments in the plains region on both sides of the border up to the end of the nineteenth century. Roe, who prepared his nine-hundred-page study using the library at the University of Alberta as his base of operations, warmly admired John McDougall's books. "McDougall's writings are not professedly 'scientific,'" Roe wrote, in one of his infrequent bibliographical commentaries; "their unpretentious accuracy makes them so. As unconscious revelations of a long experience they are of unrivalled authority for daily life in their region."[11] "Unrivalled authority" is high praise, considering the hundreds of titles to be found in Roe's bibliography; but his heavy reliance in the text of his work on data from the memoirs, as well as his further explicit commendations of McDougall's reliability as an observer and interpreter of western conditions, make it clear that this was Roe's considered judgment.

In addition to Roe's, there is also J. E. Nix's Mission Among the Buffalo, a book based on a Bachelor of Divinity thesis completed for St. Stephen's College at the University of Alberta, and issued by Ryerson Press in 1960 to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of George McDougall's appointment as Chairman of the Saskatchewan District. "This small book does not pretend to be a professional history," Nix wrote in his preface, "being no more than a prospectus to some future history yet to be written." Nix, however, could at least claim close and long-standing acquaintance with the writings of both McDougalls, as well as with the records of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. On the strength of this research, Nix was led to the belief that "to the present time few secular historians have given due weight to the part played by the missionaries in preparing the way for the coming of civil law," adding that "the ease of the transition [from lawlessness to peaceful settlement] cannot be accounted for entirely by the entry of a small force of police located at three widely separated posts."[12]

Being unwilling to offend against the modern spirit of ecumenism, Nix has taken evident care in his book to write of "the missionaries" and "the Christian missionaries" whenever he comes to attribute importance to the role of this group, avoiding specific mention of any one church or sect. He undoubtedly knew, as well, that as a minister of the United Church, his opinions were bound to meet with certain discounts among the secular historians he has ventured to criticize. No more than *Mission Among the Buffalo* does the present study pretend to be a professional history; nonetheless, after some consideration of the historiographical issues involved, I am inclined to think that Nix is broadly right: few secular historians of any kind, and none of our academic ones, have given due weight to the part played by the missionaries in preparing the way for the coming of civil law.

Consider, for example, a passage such as the following from *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, the fourth in McDougall's series of memoirs. It describes an inter-tribal camp-meeting on the plains in May 1872. This meeting, although planned as a means of missionary work among the southern plains tribes in anticipation of the establishment of a permanent mission, quickly developed into a political rally: for many of the Blackfoot and Blood Indians in camp had followed the buffalo that winter into the Missouri plateau, and knew from first-hand observation what "settlement" and "government" had brought to their allies south of the medicine line. McDougall recounted the episode in these terms:

> I dwelt largely on the benefits of peace; spoke of the future and of the inevitable change soon to come; told them that now the land was without government men did as they pleased, but the day was near when murder and wrong and theft would be stopped, and that the power to do this would, at the same time, be all-powerful and all merciful. They need not fear for the future so long as they aimed at doing the right thing between one another and all men; also that this great power coming would make no distinctions, the white man and the Indian of every tribe and nation would stand the same before it; there would be no favoritism whatever; this was the Great Spirit's wish, this was what His Word enjoined; we were brethren, and the land was big and we could all dwell in it in peace. There were in my audience many who had every reason to hate the white man; every better instinct in them had been insulted and beaten down by the selfishness of the white man; wrong and injury and bestiality and crime had they suffered from his hand; moreover, their idea of the white man's government was of a ruthless, despotic, absolute power breaking treaties, hounding men hither and thither, building prisons and erecting gallows. Oh! these liberty-loving people hated the very mention of government. But today, if what I said was true, and some of them had heard that "John" told the truth, then there was hope for them as a people (RRR, 219-20).

Were a student of western Canadian history to consider the implications of this account, the importance of the words and actions described here would be conceded immediately. Nor was this an isolated instance of the Methodists' choosing to use their influence among the Indians on behalf of government -- far from it, in fact. "We had come to the scene when the time of change was near and the long, long past would have to give way to radically new and quickly-growing conditions," reads another passage from the memoirs. "For these both father and son had been trying for fifteen years to prepare these people" (OGW, 28). Given the fact of that fifteen years' work, what can account for the reluctance of trained scholars, not only to take McDougall's published accounts at face value, but even (apparently) to read them in the first place?

There are several reasons, and I shall mention them very briefly here. First, there is the obvious consideration of the McDougalls' prominent connections with a competitive and aggressive evangelizing organization. The Methodists having been a highly publicity-conscious group, the propaganda element is seldom absent from their writings; historians are perhaps understandably uncomfortable with sources which give such abundant evidence of narrow sectarian feeling. Then, too, documents compiled after a lapse of thirty or forty years are suspect on several grounds, the unreliability of the human memory, and the intrusion of hindsight, both being serious considerations in the use of memoirs.

There are other problems, however, which have more to do with the peculiar nature of John McDougall's memoirs than with the effects of intervening time, or with their relation to a particular religious organization. The general nature of the scholar's difficulty in dealing with McDougall's writings may perhaps best be suggested if I remark that, like Vernon Whitford, John McDougall had no irony. He had sarcasm on occasion, and those occasions are very revealing; but what they reveal is a depth of feeling which, although biographically illuminating, is for that very reason prejudicial to the acceptance of the memoirs as disinterested accounts.

Understandably, it was the abundant evidence of a complex personality which intrigued J. E. Nix after his close reading of McDougall's narratives. Nix, after quoting the comment by Gilbert

Roe that McDougall's books offer an "unconscious revelation" of daily life in the region, went on to write in the introduction to Opening the Great West:

> The McDougall writings could well furnish materials for a personality analysis of their author and his unconscious revelations of himself. We do not always discern the minds of his companions or friends, but we do receive an indelible impression of the mind of John McDougall. Accordingly, he writes with candor, "In my humble judgement it is just as essential to recognize our fitness as it is to know or acknowledge our limitations." His acknowledgement of his fitness is liberally sprinkled throughout his memoirs to the point that one must ask why this man who lived such a useful and notable life found it apparently so necessary to continually remind his readers of his own worth? This facet of his personality deserves some attention, for it has profoundly affected his reputation to this day (OGW, 9).

Nix then supplies an anecdote gleaned from an account by someone who met and conversed with McDougall in the early years of the century; and I reproduce it below just as Nix gives it, partly because of the light which it throws on the character of John McDougall, and partly because it stands as one of the few genuine examples of folk-humour in western Canadiana:

> A first-hand impression is provided by Robert H. Lowie the ethnologist, who as a young man in 1907 spent seven weeks in the course of a field trip among the Stonies at Morley. Lowie relates: "When I visited the Stoney Assiniboine I at first had a room at the trader's [David McDougall]. He was the son of a famous missionary, long since dead. His older brother, a recently superannuated preacher of the gospel, was likewise a well-known figure in those part, who had, I believe, something to do with the Cree translation of the Bible. At all events, at a gathering of Stoneys which I attended, he certainly preached in very fluent Cree. He was extraordinarily cordial to me, but neither he nor his kin were exactly shrinking violets. The two brothers would pooh-pooh the then world's marathon record as something they had often outdone in their youth. The missionary brother was fond of enlarging on his physical toughness -- how of a freezing night he would make shift with a single blanket, wade across streams with hefty wives of less

> puissant fellow clerics in his arms, and so on. Later I heard it said that there were just three liars in Alberta: the trader was reckoned as one and his reverend brother as the other two (OGW, 10).

"The deceased father was still held in high esteem, however," Lowie continued; that "however" indicating certain limitations to the esteem in which he, personally, was inclined to hold the two sons, and in particular the missionary brother.

This is not the place for (nor am I competent to perform) a "personality analysis" of John McDougall. J. E. Nix finds his own answers to the question he has posed ("why this man who lived such a useful and notable life found it apparently so necessary to continually remind his readers of his own worth") in certain elements of insecurity in the man himself, writing of "subconscious resentment" of his father, and consequent "over-compensation." In addition, however, he points to two other factors bearing on McDougall's "tendency to brag." One was the physical toughness of which the missionary often boasted. Wrote Nix, "Possessed of a fine physique, born and bred to this life of demanding physical endurance, McDougall did indeed master his environment, to the extent that he had little patience with any less able than he, and became little averse to recognizing his own 'fitness' to the point of pride" (OGW, 10). The other factor was this: "McDougall had practical reasons for his desire to excel. As he said, "I have so often found this with native people, that to be as good as themselves in their craft, or sometimes a little better, is the short way to their respect and very often to their hearts.'" Nix does not expand on this "practical reason," and it certainly occupies a good deal less space in his introduction to the posthumously-published volume than do his psychological speculations; but at least he does make note of it, as one element which, on the one hand, helped to shape the writings, and, on the other, has "profoundly affected his reputation to this day."

As I see it, the lingering effects of the historical John McDougall's indiscreet insistence on his own fitness have worked to damage his standing with posterity in two ways. The first and most direct way stems from the fact that "brag" in a personal memoir is off-putting to any adult reader. What the ethnologist Lowie felt during evenings at the McDougalls' campfire at Morley, listening to the two brothers enlarge on their athletic accomplishments, the latter-day reader is also bound to feel encountering the same ingenuous record of derring-do on the printed page. The second is more indirect, and on that account more difficult to establish with certainty, but it, too, has to do with the interactions of minds and sensibilities. John McDougall spent most of his life apart from the social amenities of large centres of population, while his formal education, as no reader of his memoirs could be unaware, was a good deal more limited than McDougall himself wished it might have been. Yet he came, during the 1880's and afterwards, into a position of considerable prominence, both in his church and in the affairs of the nation at large. If his acknowledgements of his own fitness did on occasion reach the point of pride, considered in the theological sense if in no other, this trait would have been -- and in fact was -- held to his discredit by certain among his colleagues and personal acquaintances. Several of these individuals in turn have played their part, in published character-sketches of the missionary, in shaping McDougall's current reputation. Abominating pretension in any form, McDougall evidently went out of his way to puncture egos which were probably no more inflated than his own; but the result was that he often offended, by means of an ill-timed display of defensive pride, precisely those among his visitors and colleagues who, being educated and articulate men, could do him the most damage through their own published writings.

For the historian, however, as distinct from the biographer, the element of brag in a personal memoir has another dimension, and this places us squarely in the issue of McDougall's reliability as a source for the writing of western Canadian history. Memoirs cover a very wide range as a genre; some consist merely of daily notations of events and data, with little overt interpolation of the writer's personality, while others give, as McDougall's do, an indelible impression of the mind of a single, dominating individual. Egocentricity -- the spot-lighting of the feelings and thoughts of the writer at the expense of other minds and personalities -- inevitably leads to the conviction that the document in question constitutes the writer's apologia pro vita sua, a form which carries with it the automatic requirement that his testimony be scrutinised with the utmost suspicion. We do not have to be professional historians to know what part personal vanity can play in the treatment of evidence. Faced with an egocentricity of the awesome proportions revealed by McDougall's writings, historians of the west may in some measure be excused if they are reluctant to take his rendering of events with anything less than a hundred-weight of salt.

Related to McDougall's egocentricity, too, is another possible reason for his present low standing with scholars, although members of the historical profession may not find it gracious of me to make the suggestion which follows. I think, however, that it may have some bearing on the case, if a very limited one. I refer to the fact that John McDougall did not choose to wait for historians of a later generation to assess the merits of his contribution to the development of the west, but showed instead a low-born eagerness to have the satisfaction of receiving full public credit for his work during his own lifetime. Although McDougall admired tact as a personal quality in others, there were many occasions in his life when he blundered seriously in his own attempts to exercise that rare and delicate accomplishment. And of all the tactless things that John McDougall ever did, his decision to use his memoirs to anticipate the judgement of history stands out as the most glaring.

Early volumes in the series show McDougall struggling to be properly modest and oblique. Take, for example, this passage from Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe, published in 1898:

> I will never forget the old hero's eloquent harangue before a council of excited warriors, who had been discussing the desirability of driving the white people out of the Saskatchewan country. . . . Old Stephen got up, and . . . spoke as follows: "Young men, your words have made me sad. I have said to myself, while I listened to you, These men do not think. Has it never come to your minds that this big country we live in is almost empty of men, that one can travel many nights between the dwellings and tents of men, and not

> see a human being; and do you think this can continue? . . . I am not selfish enough to believe that all this big land was for me and my people only. No, I seem to see great multitudes occupying where I have roamed alone. Young men, the change is near, and the Great Spirit has sent his servants to prepare us for its coming. . . . You cannot keep the white men out of this land. . . . It will be; it must be; it is destiny. Then, young men, be wise, and listen to those who can prepare you for these changes which are coming, surely coming."
>
> Ah, thought I, this man has attended the school of the prophets; the Infinite has spoken to him (SSS, 203-5).

By which, of course, John means that old Stephen has acquiesced in the prophecies of George and John McDougall; if the Infinite has spoken, It has spoken through the mouths of certain, highly identifiable, human agents. But by 1910, when he was preparing his last completed manuscript for publication, the missionary had given up being even this indirect. On pages 215-6 of On Western Trails, with regard to the peaceful establishment of police posts at Macleod and Edmonton in the fall of 1874, he made this unequivocal assertion: "I claim that the missionary of the Gospel of Jesus Christ had more to do with the peaceful occupation of this immense land than any other man. He was the real forerunner in this case. In buffalo and moose-skin lodges, in the centres of great encampments, beside many campfires, during countless conversations as thousands of miles across country were being traversed, he glorified the law, he extolled order, he preached forever peace and loyalty to good government, and thus the minds of the people were prepared and waiting for this day we now beheld." In this passage, McDougall specifically wrote, not of "the Christian missionary," as in Nix's more diplomatic phrase, but "the missionary of the Gospel of Jesus

Christ" -- that is, the Methodist missionaries who were the only representatives of the "Gospel" branch of Christianity in the far west prior to the arrival of the police. In which case, when we see the words, "He was the real forerunner," we know there can be only two actual individuals to serve as referents for the pronoun "he". Make that sentence read, "We were the real forerunners," and the last shred of opacity falls away.

These, then, are several of the influences bearing on the evident conclusion by contemporary historians in the west that John McDougall, in his own person, constituted two thirds of all the liars in Alberta during the early years of the century. Yet even here the list is not complete; for I think that there is one more aspect of these writings which remains to be taken into account in explaining their relative obscurity today. I have referred already to the implications of the form of these writings, from the point of view of the seasoned student of history: that is, their association with a well-known *genre* of autobiography, the *apologia pro vita sua*; but it may be that it is not this form, but some other, which has led to their disrepute as historical source materials. For if the publisher's advertisements are to be believed, McDougall's initial reputation as an author in Canada hinged largely on his talent for turning out adventure books for boys. Nor is this association with a juvenile audience in the least unfounded: Methodism always did believe in taking hold of the young, and sub-titles such as "Life and Adventure in the Far West of Canada" carry an obvious appeal for youthful readers. Boys' adventure stories, however, being notoriously exaggerated and simple-minded affairs, what responsible historian would give them a second glance? Or even a first one?

Whether from thoughts along these lines, or from any combination of the problems earlier identified, John McDougall's low standing with scholars of the past three generations has had the unfortunate effect of depriving the current generation of Canadians of full access to a unique and valuable avenue of insight into two important eras in the development of Canadian society: first, the period of the 1860's and '70's, marking the transition years of the west; and secondly, the early 1900's, during which time significant numbers of Canadians began to assess their national achievements and aspirations. John McDougall partook of both these formative generations in our history, on the one hand as a prominent participant in the political and social development of the west, and on the other, as one of a relatively small group of turn-of-the-century Canadians to create works which speak across time to later readers. In reminding his countrymen -- from whatever motives -- of the worth and significance of the work and the workers during the transition period in the interior, John McDougall played a part, however small, in that process of self-definition without which, according to H. B. Parkes, no civilization can achieve greatness.

We do not have to wonder with J. E. Nix, however, why McDougall should have found these constant reminders so necessary. When John Maclean wrote of his old friend's well-known role as "defender of the West, /hurling/ thunderbolts against ignorance and hasty observations," be it from "a disgruntled tenderfoot" or "a distinguished but critical tourist," he did not choose to be more specific than this in identifying the source of provocation. I have already outlined one such source in Butler's The Great Lone Land, and I shall be returning to this theme in later pages; but there is one particular episode from the mid-1890's which bears so closely on the immediate causes for the publication of McDougall's memoirs that no examination of his work can afford to leave it to one side.

This episode originated in John McDougall's most extended (to my knowledge) performance in the role of book reviewer, recorded in a forty-page pamphlet, printed by William Briggs in 1895, bearing the title 'Indian Wigwams and Northern Camp-fires.' A Criticism. The first part of the title refers to a book published in London two years before, in 1893, by Egerton Ryerson Young. Young (who should be kept separate in the reader's mind from George Young of Winnipeg) had, in McDougall's own words from his biography of his father George, "spent eight years of zealous missionary toil at Norway House and Berens River" as a Methodist missionary from 1868 to 1876 (GMM, 134). A Canadian, Young subsequently returned to southern Ontario and travelled thence to England, where he mixed active recruitment for workers in the Indian mission field with a highly-publicized (and allegedly lucrative) career on the lecture platform.

The subject of E. R. Young's relations with his co-religionists on both sides of the Atlantic would probably fill a good-sized monograph in itself. He was seldom seen in a neutral light, and John McDougall was not alone in writing of him in some exasperation of tone. Still, McDougall's published comments were probably among the most heart-felt that Young ever encountered among his critics. The two men's mutual suspicion, evidently some time in the making, finally erupted in a violent quarrel in print in the columns of the Christian Guardian in 1893 and 1894. After several letters from each man, the Guardian refused to be party to the dispute any longer, forcing McDougall into having the whole exchange published in pamphlet form at his own expense. It is not hard to understand the Methodist paper's decision. Rev. Nix would probably find the two men's letters distinctly unedifying, since both missionaries seem to have been bent on running the entire gamut of Touchstone's seven degrees of disputation, and neither was above an unseemly degree of personal spite. The exchange of criticism and insults ended inconclusively, with no particular credit to either writer.

The quarrel sprang out of the first letter printed in the pamphlet, in which McDougall began by stating his wish to "kindly criticise some of the scenes and statements contained" in Young's just-published book, and proceeded to a detailed critique running to over thirty items.[13] The main thrust of his criticism (although there are variations and qualifications) is that particular facts and descriptions are "not true to the life of the time." He writes, for example, "On page 93, as with many of these scenes and descriptions in this book, Mr. Young introduces matter entirely foreign to the range of his work and experience," adding, "This I would not altogether object to if he was very careful as to data." His particular grievance here is Young's description of Maskepetoon as "a war-like chief," who delighted in "the practice of unheard-of barbarities upon the captives of other tribes who fell into his hands." McDougall retorts, "Now, this is a libel on one of nature's noblemen." Again and again McDougall returns to the refrain, "The whole thing is sadly astray from fact." He does not accuse Young of deliberate misrepresentation; rather he explains these lapses from the straight and narrow path of factuality by blaming Young's informants, who have amused themselves by taking advantage of the ignorance of the "'tender-foot missionary.'" He concludes his review by writing:

> All through this book Mr. Young, when speaking of Indian women calls them "squaws." In the name of decency and civilization and Christianity, why call one person a woman and another a squaw? I have no patience with anybody who calls one a "man" and another a "buck" and another a "nigger," and women "squaws" and "wenches"; but that a missionary of Gospel democracy should do this is most certainly out of place and inconsistent, and betrays great ignorance of essentials to true manhood. And now, as a great part of this entertaining book is foreign to both time and scene, and has been read in other books, I will retire from my borrowed position of critic, back into
> Yours truly,
> John McDougall.

In replying to this devastating review, Young, while making plain his personal aggrievement at being so roughly handled by a brother of the cloth, also played right into his critic's hands by insisting that everything he wrote about "the wild pagan Indian character" was true from first to last, his statements having been "founded . . . on what I learned from books, combined with personal experience."[14] "Not only have I gathered up, as my friends know, scores of volumes by the best Indian writers, but I have for many days here in England, in the British Museum, in its marvellous library, pored over the now priceless volumes, because of their rarity, of the early writers on the Indians of North America," he wrote in his defense. Countering one of the criticisms, he chided his correspondent, "John, I am ashamed of you, to so carelessly read your books. If you will read the journal of printed letters of the first Miss Batty, . . . you will find a cooking scene very similarly described." His main response, however, was that McDougall's letter to the Christian Guardian had been "prostitution of honorable criticism." "All this blow and bluster amount to nothing but to enable him to have a fling at a brother missionary who, he says, 'has been imposed upon.' Where is the kindly criticism in this, many would like to know?"

Young had a few kindly criticisms of his own to make: that McDougall's "conceit would be amusing if it were not so absurd," that he has stooped to "contemptible insinuation," that he displays "mental obtuseness" and "sublime egotism," that his criticisms are "childish," and that one remark in particular, while "cruel and heartless and unbrotherly," is nonetheless entirely "consistent with himself." And he wrote, to the man he had called in his own book, "the beloved Rev. John McDougall":

> My life and record are before the brethren of my Conference, who decide as to my work; and to them I am thankful I am responsible, and not to this critic.
>
> Does John McDougall not know that it was his father who urged the Missionary Committee to write me that letter published in "By Canoe and Dog-Train" [an earlier book by Young], which led my wife and me to go out into the Indian work?
>
> The long years we spent among the Crees and Salteaux were full of toil, but rich in blessings. Nothing would

> give me greater joy than to pass through all the hardships again -- and we have many of which he knows not -- if the same glorious triumphs should crown our labors. He calls it but a short time, and yet let any candid one consult the missionary records and see if, in all my critic's life, he accomplished anything like the same amount of success. "We live in deeds, not words."

Of the remainder of this pamphlet, as it passed from Reply Churlish to Countercheck Quarrelsome, I shall inflict no more upon the reader, except for this one further passage, which constitutes John McDougall's self-justification in the face of what he himself called the "challenge" in E. R. Young's words. Wrote McDougall:

> But in this connection my reviewer rises to sublime heights of egotism, and says, "Let any candid one consult the missionary records, and see if in all my critic's life he has accomplished anything like the same amount of success." Now, I will say nothing about my boyhood spent in the mission field in association with my father, nor will I consider the eight years of direct work in the North-West at Norway House and on the plains before my reviewer came to the mission field, nor yet will I go into the eighteen years of continuous work, under heavy responsibility, since Mr. Young left the field, making a total of thirty-four years' actual and continuous work north and west of what is now Winnipeg; but I will speak only (and but little at that) of those years contemporaneous with my reviewer, and in doing so will adopt his reasoning, that is, "deeds, not words" -- that eight years of his life spent on Indian missions more than balance the fifty-one of my life also spent among Indians; that he must have been a prodigy and I a dunce; that his opportunity was a very great one and mine was very ordinary.
>
> Now, I leave it to any candid man or woman if my deductions from his assertion or challenge are not fair; I think they are.
>
> But, suppose during those eight years my opportunity was the greater of the two. More work to be done, more risks to be run, greater distances to be travelled -- base of supplies 1,000 miles distant, instead of 400 and 200 miles, as was the case with him -- wild and lawless Indians and even wilder and more lawless white men to be dealt with and circumvented and won to God and country; tribal war all the time, rebellion to be frustrated; terrible epidemics to be endured without either law or doctor or medicine to help; peace to be negotiated, and in doing this fearful

> risks of life taken; a new mission to be formed and established in the most dangerous part of the territory; work for the Government to be undertaken and accomplished, which prepared the way for the police, and the establishing of law and order in the North-West, in doing which, constant risk of life was undergone; the Gospel to be preached to different tribes, speaking different languages, and also to wild and wicked white men -- surely there is nothing commonplace or ordinary about this work, which was ours to do during the years referred to; and that we did this work by the grace of God and with His constant help, will show that I am not the dunce my reviewer would make me.
>
> But I will go further and say there were periods during those eight years -- really critical times in the history of this country, when it was laid upon us to have more to do in two weeks, and also more in a month and in two months -- I say there was more risk, and more vital interest, and more accomplished in any one of these (as to time) short periods than my reviewer was called upon to run or observe or accomplish in the whole of his sojourn of eight years in the mission field.
>
> No, my dear Mr. Young, yours was the ordinary and ours the very extraordinary life during those eight years we were contemporaneous, all of which can be abundantly proven not by "words" but by undeniable proof. And now, Mr. Editor and good people, I also (like my reviewer) have become an egotist, but you remember who drove me to this.[15]

Yet, John McDougall must nonetheless have come to realize, upon reflection, that the "undeniable proof" of his accomplishments, while visible to himself in the shape of social and political and religious institutions -- what in the biography of his father he had called the "established fact of Methodism in the North-west" (GMM, 134) -- remained virtually invisible to the vast majority of the "good people" who read the Christian Guardian, for example; invisible likewise to the audiences across the Atlantic ocean whose principal informant on matters relating to Northwest missions was the entertaining Mr. Young. Those accomplishments, which McDougall summarizes in two paragraphs in this letter, could hardly be "proven" by consulting the records of the Church Missionary Society; they could not be "proven" even by the kind of polemical exchange which had ended in his categorical rejection of Mr. Young's challenge. "Undeniable proof" must become, after all, a matter of "words": of constructing for readers in Canada his own personal record of those eight years, "really critical times in the history of this country," when the work for God and country was at its greatest intensity of risk and responsibility and vital interest. Hence the publication, late in 1895, of the first in what would become a series of six volumes telling the story of that work, from the viewpoint of the worker.

The broad outlines of the work were not in question. There were sufficient records already extant which could "prove," for example, the number of missions initiated by the McDougalls over the years, the workers recruited and trained, the buildings constructed, the monies raised and disbursed, the marriages and baptisms performed, the joyful deaths witnessed, the souls won to everlasting glory. These and other characteristic aspects of the work the sceptical observer could, if so inclined, discover in the Annual Reports of the Church Missionary Society, in accounts by Methodist churchmen who had witnessed the enterprise with their own eyes, and indeed in the biography of George Millward McDougall issued by the Methodist Book Room in 1888. What John McDougall, with the attack of E. R. Young fresh before him, now saw in need of proof were the heretofore unrecorded elements attached to that work, the risks and responsibilities which George McDougall had taken so much for granted, but which obviously impressed readers in eastern Canada and England as novel and exciting -- in a word, extraordinary.

The memoirs of John McDougall, then, are chronicles of a certain period in western development: not chronicles in the sense of disinterested or on-the-spot recording, but sequential reconstructions of a past era, admittedly after a considerable lapse of time, yet based on the notations of regularly-kept memoranda and shaped by a vigorous and retentive mind. As such, they do indeed provide valuable revelations of daily life in their region, as Gilbert Roe maintained, constituting a storehouse of data of a social and even anthropological nature. Yet there are two attributes of these writings which must be insisted on before we proceed to the more detailed examination of their nature projected for the three chapters to follow. One is the inappropriateness of Roe's word "unconscious" in describing the revelatory quality of the memoirs. Only deliberate and conscious intent could account for the coherence and consistency with which McDougall portrayed the experiences of his early life, in six books written over the space of sixteen years. The second (and ultimately related) aspect is the authority of tone with which he conducted his self-chosen task of defining the essentials of Canadian civilization as he knew it. The deeds were important; but even more important were the known principles along which certain historic individuals had interpreted their duty for the time they lived in.

IX

THE NEW GENTRY

> The preacher may preach ever so good, but he himself is to these people the exponent of what he preaches, and they judge the Gospel he presents by himself. If he fails to measure up in manliness and liberality and general manhood, then they think there is no more use in listening to his teaching. Very early in my experience it was borne in upon me that the missionary, to obtain influence on the people, must be fitted to lead in all matters. If short of this, their estimate of him would be low, and their respect proportionately small, and thus his work would be sadly handicapped all through (SSS, 51-2).

Thus in four brief sentences John McDougall summarized what he had learned from a lifetime of experience as a missionary among Indians. His message was simple and clear: that "the people," presented with concepts such as salvation, justice and government, invariably measured the worth of these unfamiliar abstractions by the integrity of the individuals who acted in their name. Recognizing this as a habit of mind pregnant with consequences for the transition period in the west, McDougall was therefore intent in his memoirs on showing how much the peaceful introduction of white settlement into the region had depended on the characters of a relative handful of men.

Prominent among this handful, of course, were the North West Mounted Police. McDougall opened the final volume of his memoirs (the one which remained unfinished at his death) with these remarks on the contribution of the police:

> During the mid-summer of 1875, the Mounted Police had been some eight months in this Western country. The whiskey trade among the natives with all its horrors had been most effectually suppressed and any liquor smuggling or trade of that kind was now altogether among the white men and that in the most clandestine manner. The Indians were breathing freely and closely watching the conduct of the Police and the administrators of government.
>
> This whole Western land was in the experimental period of its history and it was most fortunate that there was at the head of affairs at the time such a man as Colonel Macleod, who himself exemplified the true spirit of democracy. His tact and fine sense of fair play appealed to all alike, to the nomadic and hitherto warring Indian and also the lawless white man. Both felt that Canadian law and British justice were splendidly personified in Colonel Macleod (OGW, 13).

Yet according to McDougall, the Indians, "closely watching the conduct of the Police and the administrators of government," were not blind to the fact that the police themselves were occasionally involved in the clandestine liquor trade; while indiscretions along other lines sometimes strained relations between natives and whites. Describing these embarrassing circumstances some forty years later, McDougall was not above a certain disingenuousness:

> In the main [the Indians] were glad of the change but they had some criticism of the conduct of the police. They said they were inconsistent. While putting down the whiskey trade the police themselves were fond of whiskey and drank all they could lay their hands on. Some of them were immoral and set a bad example to the Indians; some of the laws the police made were very good, but others were foolish and unnecessary. Thus these neophytes, under law, freely discussed with me the situation. I did my best to explain, apologise, to condone and assure them (OGW, 40).

And thus does John McDougall, speaking as merely the non-commital recorder of a palpably naive interpretation of events, hardly less freely discuss the situation with his readers.

Speaking on his own behalf, however, McDougall did not engage in open criticism of the police, probably recognizing that to place an entire corps of men in the position of representing so august and demanding an ideal as "all British justice" was to ask rather a lot of mere mortals. Besides, he wanted to make clear that he had been very glad to see the police arrive. Having moved to the southern plains in the spring of 1873 to begin his mission to the plains tribes, McDougall was dismayed by the conditions he found. Among the whiskey traders of Whoop-up, "to kill an Indian was a meritorious act. . . . This was the creed of the Great West across the line, and these men had brought this creed over into our country; and who was there to say them nay? We had no government; we had no one in authority; truly, just now, 'might was right' (OWT, 66). Describing the period in which construction of the buildings for his mission at Morley was begun, he later wrote:

> While we were thus occupied during the first months of 1874, south of us and within one day's journey from our fort several whiskey mills were vigorously at work, demoralizing and decimating the plains tribes, and this continued right through to the boundary line. Scores of thousands of buffalo robes and hundreds of thousands of wolf and fox skins and most of the best horses the Indians had were taken south into Montana, and the chief article of barter for these was alcohol. In this traffic very many Indians were killed, and also quite a number of white men. Within a few miles of us, that winter of 1873-4, forty-two able-bodied men were the victims among themselves, all slain in the drunken rows. These were Blackfeet. Just a little south of us the Spanish cook I mentioned earlier in the book was killed by Dutch Fred, who also was my loud friend. There was no law but might. Some terrible scenes occurred when whole camps went on the spree, as was frequently the case, shooting, stabbing, killing, freezing, dying.
>
> Thus these atrocious debauches were continuing all that winter not far from us. Mothers lost their children. These were either frozen to death or devoured by the myriad dogs

> of the camp. The birth-rate decreased and the poor red man was in a fair way towards extinction, just because some men, coming out of Christian countries, and themselves the evolution of Christian civilization, were now ruled by lust and greed. Canada's fair name was at this time in this section of the country in jeopardy (OWT, 128-9).

Under the circumstances, it is not hard to understand McDougall's respect for the prompt and efficient action of Colonel Macleod and his men during the force's first few months in the west. The memoirs emphasize the fact of his respect; but they also emphasize his belief that the police were building on groundwork laid by others:

> This vast country with its latent wealth was just now waiting for the beginning of settlement and the introduction of organized government. In preparing it for these great changes two important influences had been at work: the one was the humane and conciliatory policy of the Hudson's Bay Company; the other the work of the Christian missionary. . . . British law had been lectured upon and discussed in their camps, large and small, throughout the length and breadth of this big country more or less for the last thirty-five years.
>
> The strongest and most reasonable natives had believed in its beneficence and now in the new day they were on the side of the government and the Mounted Police who came as its representatives. To these enlightened Indian minds one policeman represented all British power and, better than this, all British justice (OGW, 13-14).

In his introduction to Opening the Great West, J. E. Nix quotes the American scholar Paul F. Sharp, who wrote that John McDougall's "biting criticisms of the Lord's enemies made him the most controversial man in the region" (OGW, 9). Whiskey traders, ruled as they were by "lust and greed," were indisputably to the forefront among the Lord's enemies, and as such they came in for some pretty plain speech in McDougall's memoirs. Not even the Lord's friends, however, were immune to "kindly" criticism from

McDougall. This fact was one which a number of prominent Methodists besides E. R. Young discovered upon publication of McDougall's books. There was, for example, the case of Lachlan Taylor, General Secretary of the Canadian Methodist Conference in the mid-1870's. Taylor made a tour of western missions in the summer of 1873, reporting back to the brethren in an account printed as an appendix to the Annual Report of 1874 (George Young, in Manitoba Memories, included an abbreviated version of this report under the title, "Dr. Lachlan Taylor's Wonderful Tour Among the Missions in the 'Great Lone Land'").[1] The General Secretary was an elderly man when he undertook this tour, and died not many years afterwards. I offer McDougall's forthright remarks on his superior in the church at some length here, for although McDougall had strong feelings about those who would "calumnize the dead," in his own phrase, he nonetheless took the opportunity offered by certain events in Dr. Taylor's visit to place on record his considered judgment (McDougall was seventy when he wrote this passage) of how men -- and nations -- were to be measured:

> We jogged along to suit the pace of our venerable friend's infirmity, for it was plain he was very weary, and, unlike other men, he was letting himself go with his will, for, after all, this is the large sum of the difference between men, one gives away, the other, by dint of sheer will power, gathers himself to resist and conquer. Hundreds of times we have been there. Hundreds of times we have watched other men as they struggled, and presently the spirit would dominate; but here to-day the steady jog was too much and we had to slow down. We should have made our party before dark, but the night found us many miles short, and in the big wilderness. There was nothing for it but to camp, and we had no camp equipment with us. For father and myself, this was as nothing. To go without supper and breakfast, to pass the night without blankets was but a change, but our doctor felt the hardship keenly. He was a spoiled

> child and grumbled and blamed and scolded. We made a pleasant campfire; we fixed him up a bed with saddle blankets and our coats; we did what we could, but he refused to be comforted.
>
> Here was a sample of spurious civilization. We have met a lot of this in our time; too much coddling, too much comfort, too much false sympathy, and the result a misconception of life and its responsibility, and the further result is moral and physical degeneracy. No wonder the Lord has every little while to bring trouble upon a nation or people. They must war and fight and campaign and struggle and meet disease and calamity in order to be saved from inertia and destruction. I thought this that night as I gathered wood and kept the camp fire burning beside our sorely set upon and awfully persecuted fellow traveller.
>
> With the dawn we were away, and at the slow pace of our friend it was nearly noon when we came up to our party and breakfast. Give me the men who, in the blackness of storm and long distance from the base of supplies, are normal and cheerful and gladly willing to do and be the best that is in them. However, we must be patient; humanity, even as Israel of old, is still in the wilderness, and yet we do verily believe that the Joshuas and Calebs are multiplying in human experience (OWT, 37-9).

"Give me the men who . . . are normal and cheerful and gladly willing to do and be the best that is in them": a great deal to ask, as McDougall knew even as he wrote. For only a few pages earlier he had mused in these terms, again apropos Dr. Taylor:

> Very seldom do we find men of an equipoise, men whose judgments abnormal conditions will not move. Surely these will multiply, else the race will degenerate.
>
> Behind me were two distinct types of manhood [Dr. Taylor and the Indian driver, Jacob], and often I amused and educated myself as I drove along at the head of our little caravan, in studying these unique characters, with whom I was thus brought into contact. How often it was borne in upon me that our civilization as it is called does not produce the gentleman, and even the higher influence of Christianity must struggle with our race for centuries to make real men and women (OWT, 33).

The definitive test of Dr. Taylor came, however, when the mission party spent Sunday in camp with a band of Cree Indians with whom John was well acquainted.

> All day Sunday we visited and held services. For the most part this camp still clung to the old faith, and Dr. Taylor was disgusted with their heathenism and manner of living. The head man invited our party to a meal in his lodge, but the doctor refused to accept. Father and myself and young Snider went and partook of this hospitality, but I could see the Indian was hurt because the great "praying man" had not come. The real democratic idea had not yet dawned upon the doctor's mind, and yet he had been preaching this Gospel for many years. To me it is passing strange that men will profess to be exponents of an idea and yet, themselves, by their actions, constantly reveal their unbelief in the same.
>
> On Monday morning, as we drove away from this moving village, and in the quiet of our isolation from the rest of our party, I took it upon myself to show the doctor that such conduct on his part would hurt our cause, if he continued so to act, as we might come into contact with these people on this journey. He saw my point, and, like the man he was, when you got beyond his eccentric moods, he said I was right (OWT, 45).

"It is," wrote McDougall, in one of the single most important statements in his memoirs, "an essential factor with missionaries in their work with the pagan races, that they themselves be through and through transparent and consistent, or else to these will come the greater condemnation" (SSS, 149). If we are inclined to wonder at the severity of his judgement of the elderly Dr. Taylor, or for that matter, at the obvious depth of feeling behind his attack on E. R. Young's deviation from the requirements of "Gospel democracy," we can find the explanation in this uncompromising statement of the Indian missionary's duty. Conduct that could not be seen by the Indians to be consistent with what the preacher preached would hurt "our cause," and could not be allowed to pass without remark.

Whether policeman or trader or missionary, then -- but especially if a missionary -- the first white men in the west must accept the necessity of being judged by the Indians on the extent to which they "exemplified" or "personified" central identifying features of Canadian civilization. Such individuals, whether conscious of the fact or not, were all exponents of what they preached, and if they failed to "measure up in manliness and liberality and general manhood," they ran the risk of jeopardizing the entire future conduct of western development. It was indeed an extraordinary responsibility which these men bore; yet from the perspective of the early 1900's, McDougall could assert with considerable justification that the responsibility had not been misplaced. Evidently a good proportion of them had measured up, in his estimation at least; they were men of whom turn-of-the-century Canadians could be proud, and their pride need not be tinged with defensiveness, because the accomplishment had been a worthy one. It became, therefore, a question of seeing that credit was given where credit was due.

McDougall's allocation of credit for the part played by specific individuals was far from indiscriminate; yet where he felt compelled to criticize, he always gave his reasons. Consider, for example, how the memoirs assess the work of Thomas Woolsey, whom McDougall had come to know well during his youth, from having spent two years as his assistant, in 1862-4. Sent to Edmonton by the British Wesleyan Methodist Society in 1855, Woolsey, like his predecessor Robert Rundle, did a gracious work among the Cree and Stoney Indians; but he was not, in John McDougall's opinion, the best man for the job. Although possessed of personal virtues which led McDougall, among many others, to recall him with affection, Woolsey's demonstrated incapacity for certain aspects of the work was what had prompted the remark in the memoirs, quoted at the outset of the present chapter, about the handicaps which failure in leadership must place on the missionary's influence. As John saw it, however, the fault lay not so much in character as in early training, and he was therefore prepared to write, in extenuation of Woolsey's shortcomings as an Indian missionary:

> Transplanted from the city of London, Eng., into the wildness and wilderness of the far west; having had no experience or knowledge of the conditions of frontier life in a new country; with no knowledge of the language of the Indians -- indeed, I venture to say he had seldom seen an Indian -- in the presence of physical difficulties which were as legion everywhere around him in his new field, he was altogether dependent on those around him. This, too, in a country where the horseman and the hunter, and the man ready in resource under every or all of the exigencies of real pioneer life on the frontier, were tried to the utmost. If upon such men as these there were the constant strain and burden of difficulty and great hardship, what must have been the experience of Mr. Woolsey, arriving there fresh from the comforts of English life (SSS, 183-4).

Living under conditions of physical ease and convenience which would have been unimaginable to the average Englishman of Thomas Woolsey's time, it may be difficult for Canadian readers of the 1970's to grasp the full import of the contrast McDougall is drawing here between "conditions of frontier life in a new country" and "the comforts of English life." Its realization would have been a good deal easier to readers of 1896, even then engaged in the early stages of the transformation of the west, and many of them first-hand witnesses to "the exigencies of real pioneer life on the frontier." Physical difficulties were indeed a dominant fact of such a life; the supplying of food, fuel, shelter, clothing and furniture was capable of occupying the combined energies of an entire family, full time. Hence the importance of certain capabilities associated with that life: the skills of the horseman, hunter, builder and traveller; and the attributes of temperament and outlook which found expression as perseverance and optimism -- not to mention courage.

Testimony to McDougall's high estimate of the training provided by "real pioneer life on the frontier" abounds in the memoirs. "No," he wrote in a volume of 1903, "to be a real pioneer, adventurer and traveller, winter and summer, entails hard work and plenty of it. Brain and lung and muscle and good optimistic pluck, these are always at a premium. This party I am with now is full of generations of such life, and it is a pleasure indeed to dwell in camp and on the road with such men" (RRR, 45). The accidents of birth and upbringing, however, although of obvious importance, were not in themselves sufficient to ensure the breeding-up of entire generations of "such men":

> My experience has made it plain to me that only men of certain builds and temperaments can stand the roughing of frontier life. A giant on the street and in the railway car, or on the farm, may be a fearful burden to his party during a frontier winter trip. If I was going to find the North Pole, I would be very careful in the selection of the men of my party. This man, if you put him on the back of a good horse, or gave him a seat in a stage coach or railway car, was a good traveller and a fine fellow; but let the horse play out, or the stage break down, or the train stop, then he was done. The true pioneer is the man who goes on, no matter what happens (OWT, 132).

"The roughing of frontier life," then, was one defining condition, as it were, of the "true pioneer," and it would be a mistake to underestimate the part it played historically in selecting individual pioneers, and hence narrowing the range of options open to their descendants during the formative period of western society. If we are prepared to concede that there were many others besides Sam Steele who felt that it was "a man's own fault" if he failed to make good in the Great Lone Land in the 1870's, we then know ourselves to be in the presence of the kind of social definition which has been a commonplace of North-American sociology from de Crèvecoeur and de Tocqueville onwards. Success in meeting the exacting conditions of frontier life lends distinction to the personal attributes of the survivors, which then begin to harden into a scale of communal values, or code -- even as the cumulative results of such success work to change and ameliorate the original conditions. From such observations as these, it is but a short step to the "forest-born" position of Frederick Jackson Turner and his intellectual predecessors and descendants; and those who place themselves within that intellectual tradition fall readily into certain generalizations about the frontier, and about its associated human type, the pioneer, as a colonial phenomenon. "The advanced pioneers of civilization" may well stand ready-formed in the mind as a uniform social product, regardless of time and place; "American and Canadian" as "only names which hide beneath them the greed of united Europe."

These last-quoted phrases, of course, are not from the memoirs of John McDougall. The reader may recall them from pages 40 and 241 respectively of The Great Lone Land. No thoughtful reader of McDougall's volumes, however, would be in great danger of making this kind of easy assumption about the irrelevance of the Canadian boundary, or the indifference of the Canadian pioneer to questions of justice, either in the abstract or in practice. For while it would be, as I have said, a mistake to underestimate environmental influences on the shaping of western Canadian social values during the late nineteenth century, it would be no less in error to take those influences as decisive. Granted that the entire western region was in its experimental stage during those years; granted too that the vast territory from Fort Garry to the Rocky Mountains formed one gigantic frontier, to be claimed and pacified (if possible) in one thrust; it was nonetheless a frontier being subjected to a highly distinctive kind of transformation, as it came under the influence of men trained on the frontiers of Ontario -- men like Sam Steele, for one -- who had brought with them very firm ideas of what Canadian law and British justice must mean in actual application. Consequently, if we wish to understand what John McDougall meant by the influence of the "real pioneer" in western Canada, we will have to broaden our range of enquiry to include facets of character which extend beyond the complex of physical and temperamental attributes associated with the "frontier" understood as a combination of geographical and economic conditions.

We must enquire, that is, into the relation of McDougall as a writer to the political, social and cultural entity that was Canada in the middle and later nineteenth century, paying particular attention to the context and signification of certain key words. "Frontier" is one of them, "pioneer" another; and there are several more, recurring throughout John McDougall's memoirs, which deserve close and careful attention. What we should be especially on the watch for however, is not nouns alone but adjectives as well; particularly, adjectives denoting distinction, integrity or value -- words such as "actual," "true," "thorough," "genuine," and "real." We should watch for them because, as I have already indicated, it was the essential in what his experience had revealed to him that most absorbed McDougall: the "essential factors" in missionary work among the Indians, the conditions of "real pioneer life on the frontier," the distinguishing characteristics of "the genuine half-breed" and of "real men and women," the manifestations of the "true spirit of democracy," the components of "real Christian civilization." All these familiar types and concepts McDougall undertook to redefine from the perspective of the radical conservative tradition of the evangelical Christian ministry, as that tradition had emerged after two generations in the back-counties of Ontario.

With this consideration in mind, then, we might review briefly McDougall's comments, cited above in the present chapter, on two particular individuals with whom he was brought in contact in the early 1870's. Recalling McDougall's description of Colonel Macleod, that he "exemplified the true spirit of democracy," and that furthermore his "tact and fine sense of fair play appealed to all alike," do we really need the further assurance that this was a "most fortunate" state of affairs, or that Macleod "splendidly" personified Canadian law and British justice, in order to recognize the high praise intended by the description? The modifiers help, there is no doubt, but they do little more in the end than simply reinforce the implications contained in the adjective "true." Similarly in the case of Lachlan Taylor: "he was a spoiled child" is pretty direct character assessment; but much more damning in the long run is the statement that "the real democratic idea had not yet dawned upon the doctor's mind." Yet even here McDougall ends by calling his venerable friend a "man," evidently because he was willing to be instructed by McDougall in his duties as a forerunner of Christian civilization -- "real" Christian civilization, that is, and not the "spurious" civilization of which he was but a sample, in John McDougall's way of thinking.

That "our civilization as it is called does not produce the gentleman," and that "even the higher influence of Christianity must struggle with our race for centuries to make real men and women," became recurrent and inter-related themes in the series of autobiographical volumes which readers in Canada came to associate with the name of John McDougall. They were convictions formed, as the memoirs also reiterate, during his long period of service as a missionary among the Indians, the missionaries' safety and influence having for years depended almost wholly on their establishment and maintenance of a position of trust among the tribes of the west. And prominent among the means of achieving this position had been certain attributes of character and conduct traditionally associated with social and moral leadership.

Two of these attributes were the "tact" and "fair play" which McDougall was to go on record as admiring in Colonel Macleod. The memoirs record how he and his father were constantly aware that "a very little thing might make a row. Life and death were in the balance, and the missionary had to be a man of fine tact and quick judgment as well as a man of prayer" (SSS, 130). The secret, as he saw it, lay in the missionary's manner with the Indians. "Saucy, proud, arrogant, lawless fellows [the Wood Cree] were, every one of them yet, withal, courteous and kind if one only took them the right way; and to be able to do this we were studying all the time" (SSS, 130). To George McDougall, however, the lesson appears to have come without conscious studying; his success in finding the key to the Indians' trust was the result of ingrained qualities of mind and feeling:

> In the management of affairs during the presence of complex multitudes of wild men at the Mission father was well qualified to act prudently. He knew when to concede as well as to demand, and thus wisely never ran the risk of having his authority and influence brought into question. Moreover, he was a thorough democrat. To him an Indian was as good as any other man, and was given precisely the same treatment. There was none of "the inflated, superior style of man" in father's manner to anybody, either white or red. And this was very soon noticed by these "quick-sighted students of their fellow-men." He was a friend, and as such he became known among these western tribes (PPP, 110).

A "manner," of course, can always be assumed; and in any case, we are all thorough democrats these days, are we not? Of course an Indian is as good as any other man: we all know this to be true, and we say so at every convenient opportunity. The critical test of such professions, however, has traditionally been the rejoinder, "But would you want your sister (brother, son, daughter) to marry one?" Yet even on this score -- or to be more accurate, particularly on this score -- John McDougall was enabled to write with complete confidence in his father's unimpeachable consistency of belief and conduct. It was in Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie, published in 1898, that John described this incident from his own life (he was twenty-two at the time):

> Then it came to pass that I put into execution a project I had been contemplating for some time and that was to take unto me a wife. My bride to be was the daughter of the Rev. H. B. Steinhauer. I had met her in the autumn of 1862, when I accompanied father on his first visit to Whitefish Lake. Our acquaintance, which had grown into a courtship on my part, was now between two and three years old. Our parents willingly gave us their consent and blessing. Father and Peter accompanied us to Whitefish Lake, and father married us in the presence of my wife's parents and people. . . . Father gave us a pair of four-point Hudson's Bay blankets, two hundred ball and powder, and some net twine, together with his confidence and blessing; to which in all things mother said, "Amen" (PPP, 38-9).

Alberta residents of the 1970's are of course aware (but others may not be) that "the daughter of the Rev. H. B. Steinhauer" was a full-blood Indian, Steinhauer himself being an Ojibway from Garden Island in Ontario, his wife a Cree of the Edmonton area.

Furthermore, George McDougall's blessings and confidence were echoed not only by his wife Elizabeth (who appears to have said "Amen" to nearly everything the elder missionary ever said or did) but by his children as well. In the same volume of memoirs, John writes of the arrival of his brother David and sister Eliza to the mission at Victoria several months after his marriage to Abigail Steinhauer:

> These [David and Eliza] we had left in Ontario five years before, mere boy and girl, but now they had grown into young manhood and young womanhood, and the long trip across the plains had done them a vast amount of good. My sister was rather astonished to meet her eldest brother clad as he was in leather and with long hair curling on his shoulders, but this was the western fashion, and anything else would have been singular at that time and amid those scenes.

> Within a couple of days we were once more a united family and mother's joy was full. I was particularly pleased to note the manner of both my sister and brother towards my wife. The fact of her being a native did not in anywise affect the kindliness of their conduct towards her, for which I was very thankful (PPP, 98).

Even as newcomers to the west, it seems, straight from Ontario, and barely into "young manhood and young womanhood," the children of George McDougall fell naturally into the manner of the thorough democrat. The western fashion of dress was astonishing, but the western fashion of marriage alliances was not.

Whether John's first marriage was ever publicly regretted by his superiors in the Methodist church I do not know, although one suspects that his marriage to an Indian contributed at least in small part to the reluctance of the brethren in Toronto to grant full ordination to the younger McDougall during the late 1860's. Not until the summer of 1872, when John had recently become a widower on the sudden death of Abigail in April of that year, was he formally received into the ministry, after seven years of active missionary work. Nor is it unlikely that the desire to avoid a repetition of John's unorthodox behaviour lay behind the anxiety with which his superiors urged him to remarry while on leave of absence in Ontario, where white wives were a good deal more plentiful than in the west. In the memoirs, McDougall notes only that Drs. Punshon and Taylor "advised me to look around for a companion, and indeed were very solicitous on my behalf. A personal matter, that even my own father had never presumed to mention or converse with me about, these wise old men were quite insistent upon!" (RRR, 251) He does not mention any of the arguments which they attached to this intrusion into his personal life, and his reticence is to his credit -- assuming, that is, that it is reticence which this passage displays, and not sheer unworldliness.

McDougall's need for a companion, however, was clear to everyone concerned, for when Abigail died, she left to John's sole responsibility three motherless daughters, aged six, four and two. During their father's absence in Ontario in the summer of 1872, the three children were left with other members of the McDougall family in the west. John's speedy courtship of Eliza Boyd of Cape Rich, therefore, was a rather more consequential affair than a simple case of blinding and overpowering attachment. The second Mrs. McDougall was chosen at least partly in order that she might help her husband make a home for three little girls who would grow up in the Northwest of the 1870's and '80's knowing, as James and William Ross had known before them, that Mama had been an Indian.

It was on the young couple's return trip to the interior, in the autumn of 1872, that Eliza McDougall was given her first lessons in how to meet her new responsibilities, beginning with the discovery that not all newcomers from Ontario were possessed of the same breadth of outlook which the McDougall family appear to have taken for granted. In the volume entitled In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, McDougall recorded the following incident, which occurred on the afternoon of their arrival in Red River on board the International:

> It was well on in the afternoon that we began to touch the outer fringings of the old half-breed settlements. A crowd of newcomers were around me, and I was hurt to hear their language as they spoke of the English and Scotch and German and French mixed bloods and Indian peoples. These very "fresh" men were nasty and vulgar, and sometimes most shameful in their modes of expression. Presently I had my chance, for as we swept past a cluster of houses ranged in a row on the bank, a typical French half-breed in plains' costume came out of one of the houses and entered another, and the crowd, as they noticed his flaxen hair and beard and clear white face, exclaimed: "There is a white man; he is no d--d breed, at any rate." Then I said: "There is just where you are mistaken, gentlemen, for that is a genuine mixed blood, and many of these are as white and as fair as yourselves; and in any case, why call them such names and use such nasty language towards them? Whose fault is it, if it is any fault? Where did the Scotch and English and French come from? In all this you are belying yourselves, gentlemen, and I must say that I have felt hurt as I have mingled with you and listened to the tone of your conversation concerning these people. You are going into their country and will have more or less intercourse with them, and I advise you to be more careful, or at least be more courteous," and as I turned on my heel I added casually, "for I also am a half-breed." Later one of the party came to me curious to know if I really meant what I said. "Was I really a half-breed?" I laughingly told him that my mother was a pure-bred Englishwoman and my father a Scotch-Canadian, so I thought very reasonably that I was a half-breed (RRR, 261).

The reader of this passage who suspects McDougall of having evaded the issue here would be wrong. Whenever he wrote of "race," he meant "the human race"; a half-breed, if it came right down to definitions, was any mingling of national stocks. "Where did the Scotch and English and French come from," if not from the very same process which had produced the so-called half-breeds of Red River? The real issue, as he saw it, was not purity of blood, but courtesy of manner. The crowd on board the International were newcomers to a country which belonged by right of long residence, if not by land-office registry, to the mixed bloods and Indians, and as newcomers they were consequently obliged by the fundamental requirements of good breeding (in the cultural, not genetic sense) to respect the feelings of the existing population.

McDougall records that his auditors among the crowd were struck by the nature of his response to their overheard remarks on the half-breeds. They were "curious," he says, as to whether he was, as he had said, a half-breed himself; and we may reasonably assume that their curiosity was aroused either by the vehemence of his tone, or by the words themselves. Perhaps they detected suppressed emotion in his voice at the moment of speaking; perhaps, too, they took note of his having confessed to personal affront at their remarks. "I was hurt to hear their language as they spoke of the . . . mixed blood and Indian peoples," he wrote in explaining the sharpness of his rebuke to the crowd; and again, in his verbatim account of that rebuke, "'I must say that I have felt hurt.'" His listeners may have been prepared to allow for resentment on principle, knowing him to be an ordained minister of the Christian gospel; but hurt feelings?

According to the memoirs, John did not go out of his way to enlighten his listeners as to the full extent of his personal stake in their attitude towards half-breeds: the fact, that is, that he was the father of three half-breed children. This aspect of the case he left unspoken that afternoon aboard the International; left unspoken, too, in the memoirs. Rather, he left it to the inference of his readers who, if they had been following the events of his career, or (what was more reasonable to suppose) had been reading the series of memoirs as they appeared, would not have needed to have the situation spelled out to them. The personal element thus appears in a secondary role, the principal issue being the grounds on which any reasonable man ("reasonable" in McDougall's usage of the word) might conclude, as he did, that "shameful . . . modes of expression" stand in need of public correction. He closes the episode by writing, "I have knocked about a lot and have been thrown into association with many peoples, but for sublime indifference to the sensibilities of other folk and the most flagrant selfishness the ordinary white man 'takes the cake,' and if it were not for the leaven of Christianity we would be at war with all the rest of mankind" (RRR, 261).

The reader may now be in a somewhat better position to appreciate what was meant by the statement, in Chapter VIII above, that John McDougall had no irony. To blunt the force of his meaning by avoiding plain speech was a form of verbal communication alien to his mind and repugnant to his feelings. As a result, he characteristically expressed himself in language that was through and through transparent and consistent, making his meaning directly accessible to the ordinary intelligent reader. Only through occasional sarcasm did he ever approach the tones of the ironist: as, for example, in his use of the word "gentlemen" in the passage just quoted: "there is just where you are mistaken, gentlemen . . .; in all this you are belying yourselves, gentlemen. . . ." No reader of this passage, reflecting on the direct statements of principle which open and close the episode, could seriously doubt the graduated implications of this word in the hands of John McDougall.

The consideration for the feelings of others which McDougall employed in his memoirs as a gauge by which to differentiate "spurious civilization" from "real Christian civilization," putative "gentlemen" from "real men," was a habit of mind and manner which, according to McDougall, could be learned from the Indians themselves. One of the sources of his profound irritation with Indian Wigwams and Northern Camp-fires had been that E. R. Young had cast aspersions (as he thought) on the honesty of the Indians of Norway House, quite without cause. Young's comments, McDougall wrote in his Criticism, were "a serious reflection [on] their conduct," and he thought that any retaliatory action by the Indians was fully justified, for "no men are more keenly sensitive of that which is hurtful to the feelings than these sons of the wood and plain."[2] The same theme is amplified many times in the memoirs. In Forest, Lake and Prairie, for example, he comments on the manner in which the Cree of Edmonton, under the chieftainship of Maskepetoon, received George McDougall's first address to them in the summer of 1862. "That congregation," he wrote, "assembled on the highlands of the continent, under the canopy of heaven, amid such strange, and, to me, new and crude surroundings, how they listened! With what reverence and decorum they gave attention! No getting up and going away, no restless movements. On the other hand, the instinctive courtesy of the natural man was clearly apparent." And in a sentence which he was to repeat almost verbatim in the final published volume of the series more than fifteen years later, he concludes, "Civilization does a great deal for a man, but it does not always make a gentleman of him" (FLP, 197).

Many times during their years among the western Indians the McDougalls were to discover that the "instinctive courtesy of the natural man" was not always repaid in kind by white men in the region, and the discovery was of more than minor significance, for it directly affected the conduct of their work.[3] In Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe McDougall wrote of Indians "who intensely hated the white man. His cupidity, sensuality and generally aggressive conduct had at some time in their history insulted and wronged their whole being, and now they fairly loathed the sight of the white portion of the race" (SSS, 195). A few pages later, he elaborated on this point. A certain Indian, he relates,

> . was looking for something better than the old faith. But who was to reveal this better something to him? Thus far the white men he had met gave him no help. The trader's ambition, it would seem, reached no higher than muskrats and beaver, while the transient stay of the roystering, licentious, sporting aristocrat or eastern grandee, with his impudent assumption of superior make, did the Indian and the white men who followed him a great harm. But now in the fulness of time the same England that had sent to this new land rum and many a sample of spurious civilization was sending a messenger of another type. The English Wesleyan Conference sent the Rev. R. T. Rundle . . . (SSS, 202-3).

Traders and sportsmen, then, were two more samples of spurious civilization, their greed and lust and "impudent assumption of superior make" doing "the Indian and the white men who followed [them] a great harm." Christian civilization, on the other hand, sent messengers of another type. England exported both types to the west; but one was better than the other.

I would ask the reader to recall at this point G. Kitson Clark's explanation of how "the values of gentility" became "reappropriated" in the changing society of mid-Victorian England. "That the conception of a gentleman ought to include moral attributes," Clark wrote,

> was an idea which hovered through much nineteenth-century thought and was not without its influence on social values, but as a conception it was unlikely to be precise enough or powerful enough to be the ruling principle in determining social position. People were not going to test a man's gentility solely by the touchstone of his morals or his behaviour, the results of an attempt to do this would be too revolutionary and inconvenient.[4]

In this assessment of the conservatism of the English people, especially in matters of social definition, Clark was unquestionably right; just as he was right to remark that "few people were likely to judge the matter with the penetration of Jane Austen, nor to share the austerity and firmness of her principles." No matter how incongruous the association may appear on other grounds, it is clear that John McDougall was one of those few.

"I want right here," John McDougall wrote in Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe,

> to introduce "The Muddy Bull," a gentleman I became acquainted with some time in January, 1864. When I say "gentleman," I mean it in its literal sense. He was one of "nature's noblemen." . . . His wife was a natural lady, and I have often thought "Muddy Bull" and his wife gave as fine an example of married life, as it should be, as I ever saw. When I first knew these people, they were not nominal Christians, had not been married (though they had a fine family of children), had never been baptized; but for all that they were really good people" (SSS, 118).

"Literal" and "natural" are the words to be noted in this passage, being the equivalent of "genuine" or "real". There are, after all, no infallible means by which one can distinguish the "natural" lady from the "unnatural" one; there is no "literal" sense of the word "gentleman". The words denote a status that exists by general acknowledgement among a given society, a "name," as G. Kitson Clark points out, which can be earned or, in times of flux, simply assumed. The name is traditional, and exists as the product of certain social and economic developments in Western Europe. What vary through time and space, as Clark also makes clear, are the tests by which the name is assigned, and the accompanying social deference accorded. As far as John McDougall was concerned, it was enough that Muddy Bull and his wife were really good people.

John McDougall was not unaware that the principles of conduct embedded in his memoirs were probably too austere, too firm, to find general acceptance among his readers. Having described an instance of the rigid Sabbatarianism of the mission family in the 1860's, he wrote in Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe, "I do not think I would be so hard now that more than thirty years intervene and my outlook is broader, and my thought more liberal." His conclusion to this sentence, however, is entirely characteristic, as well as being significant for the evaluation of his memoirs as documents of history; for he continues, "nevertheless, I believed I was right at the time, and therefore acted as I did" (SSS, 139). Acted as he did, and as he describes himself to have done: the act itself has not been withheld from the reader despite the subsequent accession of the writer to a "broader," "more liberal" understanding. Not only the actions, moreover, but the beliefs governing the actions have been put on record, the memoirs displaying here (as, I believe, throughout) that striving towards fidelity to past conditions which is one of the prime requisites of the trustworthy source of history. Furthermore, from the same subject, that of Sunday observance, sprang another, very similar reflection, with much the same conclusion to be drawn. The passage in question reads, "Perhaps we were too legal and strictly Sabbatarian; but we must be consistent, and for this, I believe, we were doing our duty for the time we lived in" (RRR, 64). "We must be consistent" -- for if we are not, to us will come the greater condemnation, as missionaries, as men, and as witnesses to history in the making.

It is in relation to the issues raised in the present chapter, then, that I would propose our taking a close look at certain passages from each of two narratives of Northwest travel and adventure. One of them is W. F. Butler's The Wild North Land, published in London in 1873; the other is John McDougall's In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, published in Toronto in 1903. Thirty years, and several thousand miles, separated these two books in terms of their original publication; but literary history -- more, perhaps, than any other branch of the historical profession -- must take into account dimensions beyond those of time and space. First, here is Butler, describing his return to the Northwest of his dreams, again via Minnesota, some eighteen months after the completion of his first tour of travel in the region:

> It was in the month of September, 1872, when, after a summer of travel in Canada and the United States, I drew near the banks of the Red River of the North. Two years had worked many changes in scene and society; a railroad had reached the river; a "city" stood on the spot where, during a former visit, the midnight storm had burst upon me in the then untenanted prairie. Three steamboats rolled the muddy tide of the winding river before their bluff, ill-shapen bows. Gambling-houses and drinking-saloons, made of boards and brown paper, crowded the black, mud-soaked streets. A stage-coach ran north to Fort Garry two hundred and fifty miles, and along the track rowdyism was rampant. Horse-stealing was prevalent, and in the "city" just alluded to two murderers walked quietly at large. In fine, the land which borders the Red River, Minnesota, and Dakota, had been thoroughly civilized.
>
> But civilization had worked its way even deeper into the Northwest. The place formerly known as Fort Garry had civilized into the shorter denomination of "Garry"; the prairie around the Fort had corner lots which sold for more hundreds of dollars than they possessed frontage-feet; and society was divided in opinion as to whether the sale which called forth these prices was a "bogus" one or not.
>
> Representative institutions had been established in the new province of Manitoba, and an election for members of Parliament had just been concluded. Of this triumph of modern liberty over primeval savagery, it is sufficient to say, that the great principle of freedom of election had been fully vindicated by a large body of upright citizens, who, in the freest and most independent manner, had forcibly possessed themselves of the poll-books, and then fired a volley from revolvers, or, in the language of the land, "emptied their shooting-irons," into another body of equally upright citizens, who had the temerity to differ with them as to the choice of a political representative.
>
> It was greatly rumoured that some person or persons were to be arrested for this outburst of constitutional patriotism, but any proceeding so calculated to repress the individual independence of the citizen would have been utterly subversive of all representative institutions (WNL, 13-4).

Butler spent a week in Fort Garry, renewing acquaintances and purchasing supplies for his projected explorations in the "almost exhaustless waste which lies between the lonely prairies of the Saskatchewan and the icy oceans of the North" (WNL, 4). Then, "in the earliest days of October all phases of civilization were passed with little regret; and at the Rat Creek, near the southern shore of Lake Manitoba, I bid good-bye to society. The party was a small one -- a member of the Imperial Legislature, well known in Ireland, now en route to get a glimpse of the great solitudes ere winter had closed in, his servant, mine own, five horses, and two carts" (WNL, 19).

Butler's party (small, to be sure, but select) reached Rat Creek on October 4, according to the narrative (WNL, 20). Having travelled slowly all the next week, "late on the 10th of October we reached the Hudson's Bay Company's post on Beaver Creek, the western limit to the travels of my friend. Here, after a stay of three days and a feast of roasted beaver, we parted" (WNL, 22). Butler continued onwards in a westerly direction, while his friend, the member of the Imperial Legislature, turned back towards Rat Creek, Fort Garry, and Ireland. The date was October 14, 1872.

"On the morning of October 15th," John McDougall wrote in his memoirs, describing the events of that same autumn of 1872, as he and his bride Eliza set out on their nine-hundred mile journey to Edmonton, "we left the hospitable home of the McKenzies and headed westward, my little wife with democrat in the lead, the cart following, and myself in saddle driving both cart and loose horses. 'Keep the steady jog, Lizzie,' were my instructions to her who had vowed to obey me, and thus we rolled toward the setting sun" (RRR, 265). Accustomed, from twelve years of plains life, to watch for signs of other travellers, John noted the recent tracks of some Métis freighters; he noted, too, that "a considerable portion of the country . . . was newly burnt, and I was feeling sore because of the careless act of some thoughtless man, and mentally breathing out threatenings and slaughter against him."

Near the present town of Carberry, Manitoba, several hours out from Rat Creek, the McDougalls met "a party coming from the mouth of the South Branch."

> The leader was a big lordly-looking Irishman, a friend of Captain Butler, the author of "The Great Lone Land." At once he shouted out to me, "Do you know who is starting these abominable prairie fires?" I said, "No, sir," and he began a tirade against any such person, at the same time threatening what he would do if he should catch him. While he was speaking I was looking ahead for Mrs. McDougall and the cart, when away beyond them I saw a man on foot and alone, and as I was watching him I saw that he stooped to the prairie, and up came a smoke and blaze. The villain was firing the grass. "There's your man," I said to the wrathful Irishman, and with an oath he turned his horse and galloped towards the culprit, while I cantered after my outfit. Presently my big gentleman turned and met us, and asked me to become his proxy. Said he, "You are going that way; will you just oblige me by giving that rascal a terrible pounding. I will be forever grateful if you will," and thus we parted. When we did come up to the half-drunken French half-breed I asked him where he was going, and he said that his party was ahead on their way to Fort Ellice, but that they had left him when he was drunk, and he was burning the grass so they would be without feed on the return journey. I told him to jump on my cart and ride, and while I did not pound the half-silly fellow, I did give him a fright which sobered him up. This pounding some one by proxy is an old trick of others besides the Irish race, but this time moral suasion, I believe, did better, for the fellow promised me he would never again be so foolish and wicked (RRR, 265-7).

It is clear, from McDougall's handling of this episode in his memoirs, that he and the Irishman were agreed on one thing: that the Métis, in firing the grass, had acted badly by anyone's standards. The Irishman called him a "rascal," while John's words are "culprit" and "villain." In just about everything else, however, John and the Irishman were poles apart: in their behaviour, their language, and what can best be termed their credibility; and in order to underline the fact of this divergence, McDougall puts the incident in the form of a comedy of manners.

John sets the scene for his little comedy by mentioning his great irritation at the sight of the newly-burnt prairie: "I was feeling sore because of the careless act of some thoughtless man, and mentally breathing out threatenings and slaughter against him." As he tells it, however, his private, unspoken threats become swallowed up in the very public and vocal threats of "the wrathful Irishman," who approaches John (who is, we must assume, a stranger to him, or at best a slight acquaintance) without a word of greeting, and "at once . . . shouted out to me, 'Do you know who is starting these abominable prairie fires?'" John's answer is brief and civil: "'No, sir.'" But this civility is apparently thrown away on the Irishman, who "began a tirade . . ., at the same time threatening what he would do if he should catch him." John is still prepared to help out as best he can, however; and, noticing the man in the distance who is in the act of setting more fires, he passes on this information to the Irishman. He, "with an oath" but with no recorded word of thanks, gallops away towards the Métis, leaving John to follow more slowly in the same direction.

Then follows the second half of this two-act play. For the Irishman returns -- despite the fact that he is on horseback and the object of his wrath is on foot; despite the fact, too, that he can travel faster on his mount than can the McDougall outfit, with their cart and ponies. But for some reason the Irishman has decided against making good his threats -- in person, in any event. Instead, he proposes to administer his "terrible pounding" by proxy, the proxy being the young plainsman he has met who happens to be travelling in the right direction. "Will you just oblige me," is how he prefaces his request, mentioning in parting, by way of recompense for his proxy's trouble, "I will be forever grateful if you will."

If John McDougall, in recalling this incident while writing his memoirs, also recalled the feelings -- whether irritation or amusement or a combination of both -- which he bore towards the Irishman at the time, he refrained from mentioning those feelings directly in the narrative. Yet the feelings are manifestly there in the passage as it stands: partly conveyed by the contrast in language and behaviour of the two main actors in the scene, but chiefly imparted by the sarcasm of certain phrases. "Wrathful Irishman" may well stand as exact and objective description; but "a big lordly-looking Irishman" and "my big gentleman" are another case entirely, for they tell us as much about the speaker as they do about the man described. In these phrases, we have no difficulty discovering a degree of innuendo that stops just short of open insult: a discovery which is intriguing in itself, because it runs directly counter to the accepted implications of the words themselves. Remembering that the year is 1872, we can easily conceive of circumstances in which to look like a lord, or to impress others as a gentleman, would be considered to an individual's credit. It is the context and tone, however, which point to the grounds for the discernible alteration in meaning between "an Irish lord" and "a lordly-looking Irishman," between "a big gentleman" and "my big gentleman." In the latter phrase, the clue is in the personal pronoun. The shading in meaning is exactly equivalent to the difference between "a good man" and "my good man," the first denoting moral integrity, the second denoting social inferiority. In the former phrase, "lordly-looking" is the operative word, pointing towards a combination of arrogance and pretension. To look like a lord is not necessarily to be a lord, with a lord's traditional good-breeding. Certainly, on the evidence of John's account of their meeting, the Irishman has been guilty of behaviour unbecoming to a gentleman on several occasions: he has been rude, he has been profane, he has been violent of temper, and (most damning of all, in John's eyes, and yet most amusing too) he has welshed on a threat. John McDougall does not linger over the episode; but he makes quite clear that, fully as well as George Meredith, he knew what "lordliness" betokened: in the one case, Sir Willoughby Patterne carrying his English standard over that continent, in the other, transient sportsmen with their impudent assumption of superior make. A difficult question, indeed, to know who are gentlefolk and who are not; but where the standard is firmly established as being the Northwest one, not the English one, some of the difficulties can be resolved.

X

I REMAIN, YOURS TRULY, JOHN MCDOUGALL

It is surely one of the commonest motives behind the writing of autobiography that the writer wants to record his or her comprehension of the element of design, in life, in history, or in both. Nellie McClung acknowledged the force of this impulse when she wrote, in the preface to The Stream Runs Fast, "I have seen my country emerge from obscurity into one of the truly great nations of the world. . . . In Canada we are developing a pattern of life and I know something about one block of that pattern. I can say that now without any pretense of modesty, or danger of arrogance, for I know that we who make the patterns are not important, but the pattern is."[1] When we talk of design in the technical sense, however, the sense of the aesthetician or draughtsman or literary critic, for example, we generally intend to point to a good deal more than the autobiographer's rendering of what McClung in the same preface unabashedly called "the drama of life." History happens, lives are lived; but plots and patterns are the product of a designing mind, which wills the controlled interactions of all the component parts, without waste or irrelevance.

Similarly, while the characters who appear before the reader of an autobiography may be more or less vividly portrayed, yet we never lose sight of the fact that they are historic individuals, seen through the eyes of other historic individuals. Although biographies impinge, and perhaps ultimately illuminate one another, we are unlikely ever to know the minds and feelings of the writer and his closest associates with the same sense of insight that we experience with the creations of the best writers of fiction. Behind self-knowledge lurks self-justification, and we arm our defenses accordingly.

In order to deal with the memoirs of John McDougall as literary artifacts, therefore, we must acknowledge at the outset certain pre-set limits to the discussion. There can be no intelligible analysis of structure, plot and character in these books, except as these facets of prose composition relate, on the one hand, to the narrative of travel and adventure as a prose form, and on the other, to the history, also considered as a prose form. That neither of these non-fiction genres entirely escapes literary connections is a well-known fact; but in view of their joint occupation (along with many other forms of belles lettres) of the disputed territory between history and literature, it may contribute to the better understanding of what those connections are if we turn our attention to evidences of the designing mind in John McDougall's memoirs.

Apropos the status of McDougall's memoirs as a Canadian exercise in a literary genre already made famous by Southesk, Palliser, Butler, Cheadle and a dozen more, several general observations can be made. The first is of the obvious-but-important variety: that few Canadians of McDougall's time (or any time, for that matter) have been in a better position to undertake the writing of a narrative of Northwest travel and adventure, if only on the grounds of having ready to hand a store of appropriate materials. Although Bruce Peel's bibliography of the prairie provinces yields a list of several dozen residents of this country who, prior to 1914, offered for sale books of travel in the Northwest, yet with the exception of Paul Kane and Alexander McKenzie, few of these writers combined extensive travel in the region with intimate knowledge of the cultures related to the fur trade in the north, and the buffalo in the south. In McDougall's case, however, adventure was a daily occurrence, what with buffalo hunts, encounters with grizzly, moose and wolverine, the training of dog-teams, the setting of trap-lines, and, surrounding and permeating this action-packed routine, the even greater adventure of fifteen years spent among the Indian tribes of the interior prior to the signing of the treaties.

Furthermore, it is relevant to point out in this connection that travelling in the west probably consumed more of John McDougall's time and energy, over a lifetime, than any other single activity. His travels in the 1860's and onwards were simply part of his work. They reflected, on the one hand, the migratory habits of the buffalo herds and the related nomadism of the Indians, and on the other, the great distances separating the missions from their supply depots. "Eight hundred miles to do your shopping," McDougall wrote in In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, "and the mode of travel heavily laden carts, with the privilege of bridging the small streams and making boats wherewith to ferry the larger ones as you journey -- only the real pioneer will brave such hardships" (RRR, 232).

Sometimes the hardships were punishing to a degree almost unimaginable to readers of a later day -- as McDougall went to some trouble to emphasize, writing at a time when train travel was the order of the day in the territories covered by his arduous itineracy of thirty and forty years before. Describing the McDougall family's removal from Rossville to Victoria in 1863, he wrote:

> Mother was looking forward eagerly to the end of the journey. . . . No wonder she was anxious to reach Victoria, and have change and rest. Forty days and more from Norway House, by lake and river, in open boat -- long hot days, long dark, rainy days -- with forty very short nights, and yet many of these far too long, because of the never-ceasing mosquito, which, troublesome enough by day, seemed at night to bring forth endless resources of torture, and turn them loose with tireless energy upon suffering humanity. But no one could write up such experiences to the point of realization. You must go through them to know. Mother has had all this, and much more, to endure in her pioneering and missionary life (SSS, 63).

A later volume offers this capsule history of transport in the interior up to the late 1860's:

> This little party brought with them the first buckboards to come into Manitoba and the North-West. Hitherto the Red River cart had reigned supreme -- the aristocracy of the land had nothing better; but now the light and easy-riding buckboard came to conquer, and with base ingratitude the cart was relegated to the plebeian work of freighting only. No more of the dangling of one's legs over the front bar of this wooden coach; good-bye forever to the dulcet tones of squeaking axles and the shrieking of unbushed hubs! No, gentlemen, we are making history, we are entering on an epoch of development with the arrival of the springless buckboard. God bless the man whose brain caught the glorious idea and who thus became a benefactor to all who ventured upon the great continents beyond the limits of steam. Even as a palace Pullman coach is to a loaded flat-car, so is the buckboard to an honest Red River cart. We can speak feelingly, if not regretfully (RRR, 12-13).

Yet carts and wagons, no matter how advanced in design, were useful only when the ground was free of snow. Winter travel was another matter, and here McDougall's retrospective accounts covered a wide range of feeling. One was sheer exhilaration, as shown in this passage from In the Days of the Red River Rebellion:

> It was at this time that I, being on the look-out for a good train of dogs, found them. . . . I bought the dogs, and as some of us determined to go on down to Victoria for the New Year, I very soon demonstrated to all who travelled with me that I had the gem train of the Saskatchewan country, which to one of my temperament and style of travel was a benediction. Four magnifcent brutes they were, a dark brown, a jet black, and two white with tan spots. How my heart delighted in those dogs! . . . Even as I write, though over thirty years have come and gone, I can see [the lead dog's] fine hazel eyes looking into mine, and his whole expression saying, "We are more than a match for the best of them, aren't we?" and I would pat his big intelligent head and answer, "Yes, my lad, we can, with the blessing of heaven, show the whole crowd of winter travellers the way if they will keep near enough to discern our tracks."
>
> . . . It was a lively, jovial crowd that started down the Saskatchewan in time to catch the New Year at Victoria. As there were only two or three inches of snow we had to take the ice for it. There may have been a dozen trains in all, some Victoria people returning home and some Hudson's Bay officers and myself visiting. Right merrily we raced around the points, and with swinging trot and sometimes a keen gallop our dogs rang their bells. For the time being we forgot isolation and loneliness, and the distant mission and post, and went in for a good healthy frolic. My new dogs without any effort would draw away from the best trains in the party. I confess I was tremendously proud of my "find," for thus they were termed by my almost envious friends. . . . The weather was splendid, cold, crisp and clear, and the atmosphere surcharged with ozone, and we were living plainly enough to be healthy and full of spirits of the right kind. Pemmican and dried meat, with a taste of flour and water in the shape of little round cakes, served as our fare; plain enough, but partaken of with such appetites and relish as a king might well envy. Scotland, Ontario and the North-West were all represented in our camp. The blood of strong and adventurous people was in our veins and hearts, and one may be sure our camp-fire was no funeral procession. Ready joke and ringing laugh and quick

> repartee and a full flood-tide of real good nature, and thus we journeyed in right good time to Victoria, and thus with glad cheer our friends of mission and fort met us and to their hearts and homes bade us welcome (RRR, 29-31).

In another passage from a later volume, he chose to stress "cold and storm and hardship"; yet once again, the welcome of friends and family stood out in his mind as compensation:

> The weather was now very cold [John wrote, describing a trip of 1875]. We camped in a bluff and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. Then we were away early the next morning, and it took us until 8 p.m. that night to reach the mission on the hill at Edmonton. We had come from the mountains, and, as the crow flies, about 225 miles, and, with the exception of the war party, had not seen a human being. Truly, this was the great lone land. We had crossed the flat and climbed the big hill, and were as a resurrection to our friends at the Mission house. Father, mother, sisters, David's wife and little ones -- what a welcome we got! All day the north wind had been dead against us. I had not looked after my ears as I should have done, and now one of them was like a huge bladder on the side of my head. But what mattered the cold and storm and hardship such as ninety-five per cent. of present-day Canadians know nothing of? What mattered all this? We were welcomed as those of whose return that had been great uncertainty, and we felt what it is to accomplish (OWT, 113).

What these passages have been chosen to demonstrate is the fact that the main ingredients of the form at its most basic level -- travel and adventure in the Northwest -- coincided so closely with the autobiographical purpose of the memoirs that there seems little point in speculating on the degree of consciousness with which McDougall approached the range of formal choices open to him in telling of his extraordinary life in the days of the pre-settlement west. The simple truth of the matter is that no other form would have suited half so well.

Were these books, however, no more than exercises in the trials-by-flood-and-field variety of reminiscent narrative so beloved by readers of The Boys Own Annual, they would scarcely qualify for the "more detailed and critical examination" that Edward McCourt advocated in his article on prairie literature and its critics. Having indicated in the previous chapter something of the importance of McDougall's memoirs for the writing of western Canadian history, in terms of their content -- their conscious revelation of daily life in the region -- there remains to be considered what further relations can be discovered in terms of form. For while the memoirs were, as I have also argued in an earlier chapter, principally intended as a chronicle of the main events and developments of the eight years from 1868 to 1876, "really critical times in the history of this country," as McDougall insisted to E. R. Young, nonetheless, noting the omnipresence of the individual "I" in this chronicle, we are unlikely to overlook the fact that this is also the history of one man.

According to William Kilbourn, writing in this instance as historiographer, "one of the few choices that the historian as artist possesses" is "his choice of beginning and end dates."[2] For the autobiographer as artist, this choice is even more limited in scope. In Forest, Lake and Prairie, the first volume in his memoirs, McDougall began at the beginning. "My parents were pioneers," he wrote, in the first sentence of what would become six volumes of autobiography. "I was born on the banks of the Sydenham River in a log-house, one of the first dwellings, a very few of which made up the frontier village of Owen Sound. This was in the year 1842" (FLP, 11). And so the first artistic choice is quickly and conventionally made. He closed the series, however, rather less conventionally; for instead of taking his story up to the declining years of his own life, his autobiography leaves off at the year in which his father died. The posthumously-published Opening the Great West, which sees John as far as the thirty-fifth year of his life (although he was seventy at the time of writing) concludes:

> Over the 130 miles from Fort Pitt to Victoria mission in those two days we did not see another face. The whole stretch of country with its fine fertility, its ever varying landscapes, its great beauty, had not a single settler in 1876. Strings of slowly moving carts of the traders and groups of wandering natives with carts or ponies passed back and forth over this trail and away on to Fort Garry in the east or to the Rocky Mountains in the west. But there was no settler's home or cultivated land outside of the gardens and little fields of the fur posts and a few mission stations. Still this was indeed the Great Lone Land.
>
> At Victoria mission we found all well and Mrs. McDougall and our infant boy thoroughly enjoying their visit to the Sinclairs. This was Mrs. McDougall's first visit to Victoria mission since she was here in December 1872 on her memorable honeymoon trip into the far west. Truly she, as the wife of the wandering pioneer missionary, had passed through many strange and startling experiences during the eventful years which had intervened (OGW, 60-61).

At which point, the memoirs of John McDougall end.

Nor do separate volumes in the series characteristically show much concern on McDougall's part with making entrances and exits with marked éclat. Forest, Lake and Prairie (of which the opening sentences have already been quoted) set the standard form for closing out individual segments of the chronicle with this announcement:

> The second day after Christmas was my birthday. I was then twenty years of age, and thus have reached the limit given to this book.
>
> As the reader will have noticed, I began life on the frontier, and here, after twenty years, am to be found on the still farther frontier. Then it was lake-shore and forest, now it is highland and prairie.
>
> Trusting the reader will have been interested sufficiently in this simple narrative to follow the author on into the more stirring recital of experiences on the plains during the "sixties,"
>
> I remain,
> Yours truly,
> JOHN MCDOUGALL

Although McDougall here provides a rough framework for his "simple narrative," the contrast of two progressive frontiers, the critic may nonetheless reasonably suppose that "the limit given to this book" was not so much the author's decision as the publisher's, McDougall having taken his life story no further than his young manhood in the space of a volume of saleable size.

Moreover, volumes follow one another with only token transition, the reader being merely reminded of the closing episodes of the preceding volume, or given very brief, general, anticipatory notices of the one to follow, the author as a rule "trusting ere long," as he wrote at the end of one volume, "to resume the story of my early experiences on the mission fields of the Canadian West" (RRR, 303).

From one volume in the series, however, the one entitled In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, the reader may well come away with a distinct impression of artistic choice having been exercised in the shaping of the narrative. This was the book which described times -- from October 1868 to Christmas 1872 -- marked by events of great consequence in the region's history, the most important being the death of Maskepetoon, the resistance at Red River, with its repercussions on the interior, the small-pox epidemic of 1870-71, and the tour of the Sandford Fleming Expedition, in the west on preliminary survey for the promised transcontinental railway. With the arrival of this government party in Winnipeg, John knew (as he wrote in this volume) that "the world was moving, and at last our Government was awakening to some sense of the importance of the great West" (RRR, 240). What that importance was, he took care to state in the book's third paragraph:

> Forward the Star of Empire takes her course, and we on a glorious day in September of 1868, with but a portion of the original party, move onward and westward. Up along the north bank of the Saskatchewan we ride and roll; across lovely bits of prairie, through dense woods where the road as yet has been barely cut out and countless stumps are in omnipresent evidence; the heavens above a sea of glory, and the earth beneath full of autumn grass and herbage and foliage colored and tinted and gorgeous. Ever and anon the graceful and majestic bends and stretches of this mighty river are at our feet. Over thousands of acres of rich soil, down into and across numerous streams and creeks -- the three "Was-uh-huh-de-nows," the Sucker, the Vermilion, the Deep, the Sturgeon, and many others -- all arteries feeding the giant river. The stream is the father of the river, even as the child is the father of the man, and the individual the progenitor of the nation. This is why we are camping and rolling and straining and working up the slopes of a great continent. We are here to preach and live loyalty to God and country, to make men strong and true; therefore we worry along. What matters an upset, and serious loss in consequence? Who cares for breaking axles and snapping dowelpins, and splitting felloes and ripping harness, dew and rain and mud and cold and storm, and sometimes hunger, and always danger? Behold, to the true pioneer these are counted as nothing in order that the making of the man, the building of the citizen, may go on and the world be made better (RRR, 13-14).

These same years, however, also saw events of considerable importance in John McDougall's personal life. To begin with, there was the challenge to his vocation which came with Chief Factor William Christie's offer of a responsible posting, with salary to match, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company: an offer which John described in his memoirs as "a sore temptation," and one which produced "one of the crises of my life" (RRR, 55, 57). When John, on this as on several previous occasions, deferred to the wishes of his father and refused the Chief Factor's offer of secular advancement, he knew he had made his final commitment to the life of a missionary. "I was face to face with the problem of my life," he wrote, some thirty years later. "So it seemed to me at the time, and for some hours I wrestled with it, until finally I told the good Lord that I was done and would fully give myself to what I thought I was called to. This was my act of consecration, and I then and there entered into the experience of such a condition" (RRR, 57).

This crisis was but the first of several which highlighted the next eighteen months. The effects of the small-pox epidemic on the mission establishment have already been presented to the reader as they appeared to George McDougall. John gave his own account of those times in his memoirs, from the moment when the first rumours of small-pox reached the mission in the spring of 1870, until the onset of deep frost early in 1871 relieved the residents of worry of further infection. The time of tragedy, of course, was the autumn of 1870; yet according to the memoirs, a turning point of sorts was reached before the actual outbreak of sickness among the mission family, with the return of George McDougall from Fort Garry in early August. This section of the memoirs reads:

> How often during these days did I long for father's company. Some of the Indians were very sullen, and at times most insolent; they went about armed to the teeth, and were ready for any excuse to commit violence. This was a white man's disease, and they hated the whites. We were living all the time on the thin crust of a volcano; we felt it in the air, we met it on the path, it was stamped on the faces of both men and women with whom in past times we had been on the most friendly terms. The strain was continuous, disease and death and danger continuous. I often think of the true heroism of my mother at this time. She worked on, perfectly conscious of all the danger, but making no fuss, no noise. To me her conduct was sublime, and my wife and sisters all did their part. We had no scenes, each felt that work and duty were now in place. One day in midsummer, or a little later, a traveller came along going east, and he waited while I wrote a note to father to hurry him up if possible. While writing I heard the neigh of a horse, and recognized it as that of Little Bob No. 2, and running out, there was father. Oh, how glad I and the others were. He had with him Mr. Hardisty and my sister, also another sister who had come from Ontario. Having gone away a little girl, she now came back to us in the full bloom of young womanhood. More possible victims of either disease or massacre was the silent thought of some of us, and yet we were delighted to see our loved ones again, and took hold with fresh grip to stand off mishap or evil of any kind. Father's coming was as a breath of strength and security to many; his experience and strong individuality seemed as a refuge unto which one might run and be comforted. He gave us the first real intelligence of the arrival of the troops and the establishing of law and government in the Red River Settlement. He worked almost night and day in the camps around us, and many a poor heart took hold on both material and spiritual life because of his help and cheer (RRR, 127-9).

The winter of 1870-71 was a busy one for John, still feeling the effects on his health of his own bout of small-pox. On his shoulders lay the responsibility of provisioning the mission settlement, requiring him to make long journeys south in search of buffalo. Interspersed with these hunting expeditions were hazardous trips as peace-maker to the camps of the Indians, where even old friends among the Cree and Stoney tribes received him with hostility and suspicion. About the only period of the entire winter, in fact, when John was with the mission family at Victoria, was over the Christmas holidays. "In other parts of the country the disease still lingered," he wrote, "and it was thought not wise to travel for a time, so that Christmas and the New Year found us in the vicinity of Victoria. During these holidays we had special meetings and special games, and did what we could to break from out the cloud of woe and sorrow and trouble which had hung over us, in common with so many, during the past months" (RRR, 148). Other than these games and meetings, he mentions no other "special" occurrences worthy of particular notice in this holiday period, continuing in his chronicle directly on to his travels to Flag Hill and Dust Flying Lake in January 1871.

It was on his return home from a trouble-shooting assignment among the Stoney Indians around Rocky Mountain House that he learned of the death of his wife Abigail at Victoria. "Six years of companionship and mutual experiences in life had been ours," he wrote; "many hardships had we shared, many pleasures as well, and now the faithful wife and mother had gone on. The Indians at White Fish and at Victoria and Pigeon Lake mourned her loss, for to them she had ever been kind and sympathizing, and many of the women loved her. . . . Without question this was hard to bear, and yet we did not mourn as those who have no hope" (RRR, 187).

In a sense, however, Abigail's death marked the nadir in this period of his life, for the next eighteen months saw the trend of events reversed. The question of John's vocation was irrevocably settled by his formal ordination to the ministry in July 1872, after seven years "on trial". Then, while his father travelled westward from Winnipeg with the Sandford Fleming Expedition, John travelled east to Ontario for what he hoped might become a year's leave of absence so that he could continue his formal education at Victoria College. His wish was refused by his superiors in the church: he had been ordained, they told him, as an Indian missionary, and too much education might spoil him for the work. When, instead, they advised him to marry again and return as quickly as possible to the west, he acceded to their instructions. Accordingly, the last pages of the volume deal with what we have already seen described as Mrs. McDougall's "memorable honeymoon trip into the far west": "memorable" because John and his young Ontario-bred bride made the nine-hundred-mile journey west from Fort Garry through unseasonably severe weather -- "there had been no such winter on the Saskatchewan in all my experience," he wrote -- and, for certain portions of the way, entirely by themselves.

In the Days of the Red River Rebellion ends with the reunited McDougall family's safe arrival at John's mission at Pigeon Lake. Having picked up John's two eldest daughters at Edmonton, "we pushed on to our own home":

> Reaching Pigeon Lake without further adventure, we were at the end of our long journey. Two months and a half had elapsed since we left Portage la Prairie, and considerably over three months from our leaving eastern Canada. Long weary miles we had journeyed, with cold camps, deep snows, intense frosts and blinding snow-storms as accompaniments; but here we were at last, well and strong and thankful. And our people at the lake were also thankful. Donald and all the rest of the natives welcomed our coming, and soon the chimneys of our two-roomed shanty were belching forth sparks and smoke, and by New Year's eve we were comfortably domiciled. My wife had undergone great hardships. Perhaps there never had been just such another bridal trip as this we had come safely through. To start thoroughly prepared for a winter trip such as ours would be hard enough in all truth, but to be caught as we were, almost wholly unprepared, while yet six hundred miles intervened between us and our destination, added tenfold to the dangers and difficulties. Truly my little wife, who bravely endured all this without a murmur, deserves to be ranked among the heroines of frontier life (RRR, 301-2).

As this brief resumé is meant to suggest, the subject matter of this particular volume in the series was more extraordinary or dramatic than even the "stirring" and "thrilling" anecdotes which McDougall had to offer in his other books. What it is also meant to suggest, however, is a discernible element of pattern in the sequence of events, as they fall into a structural framework that is "dramatic" in the literary-critical sense as well. The pattern is a familiar one, and simple enough in outline: the strain of deepening misfortune and suffering, the crisis of the deaths of loved ones, and the gradual resolution in the return to forward-looking plans, the story ending with the marriage and home-coming of the central character -- a home-coming no less satisfying for being to a "two-roomed shanty . . . belching forth sparks and smoke." Summed up in this fashion, we have no difficulty in recognizing a classic comic plot. It is not, of course, the "created" plot of the writer of fiction or drama; rather, what we perceive is the suggestion of pattern or design in life made possible by the thoughtful exercise of the historian's artistic choice.

This suggestion, moreover, is strengthened by a further structural device in this volume of the memoirs, the framing of the narrative by two passages, one at the beginning and one at the end, dedicated to defining the significance of Edmonton as what, in the biography of his father, he had called a "nucleus of Christianity and civilization" (GMM, 118). The first, from pages 15-16 of In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, reads:

> But now we are approaching Edmonton. This is a prominent place; has been on the map of Britain's empire for scores of years, has been a "station" in the Minutes of a large Conference for a long time. Are there any hotels? None. Are there any churches? One, a Roman Catholic. How many stores? One, the Hudson's Bay Company. What is the population? From twenty to one hundred and fifty; and in tones of bitter disappointment the sad traveller turns away with the despairing comment: "And this is the end of it all! Oh, my, what folly to send us out to such a place." Well, just here we are in accord, and sometimes even wise men make mistakes in their disposition of humanity. Edmonton, as she really is, stands for the centredom of the great Saskatchewan country -- the centre in religion, government, commerce, transport. Within the four walls of yonder little fort, and within its wooden bastions and picket sides large business is conducted and far-reaching measures are planned. Its tentacles run out and grip this country in all directions. The population, we have just said, was from twenty to one hundred and fifty. We meant in this the residents of the post, for outside its walls hundreds, sometimes thousands, encamped. Hitherto the tribes came up for trade and barter, as also for war and revenge; here many a temporary peace was patched up and again broken; here scenes of butchery and rapine and murder took place, and it was truly wonderful how this stout little frontier post had held its own throughout the years, amidst such constant turbulence and strife. The policy of the great Fur Company had much to do with this. They took sides with none, they were the friends of all; theirs was truly a paternal attitude to every Indian in this whole land.

The second of these two passages occurs on page 301:

> We spent Christmas with the Edmonton folk, and thoroughly enjoyed the rest and fun of the holiday season in this far-away upland centre. Here was a small world in itself, isolated and alone. No mail, no telegraphs, only a few Hudson's Bay Company traders and missionaries and adventurers, and yet the Sabbath services and week-night entertainments of the winter of 1872-3 would do credit to many a larger place. Indeed, had these hardy pioneers not strained to keep up in those things which appeal to the mental and spiritual, there would have been a terrible lapsing into barbarism. Lectures and literary entertainments and concerts, as also a growing interest in church work, kept these men and women shoulder to shoulder with the best in any country. In all this father took the lead, and was much respected and reverenced by both the white and the red men.

With John McDougall's statement that "in all this father took the lead, and was much respected and reverenced by both the white and red men," it seems appropriate to turn from questions of structure in these memoirs, and move on to characterization: in particular, the use of the concept of the hero. While limitations of space do not permit as full a discussion of this aspect of McDougall's memoirs as I think it rightly deserves, nonetheless it is possible to point here to the existence of not one, but two heroes in these books. One is the carefully-delineated hero as pioneer, both as an individual and as a social type; the other is the rather different kind of community leader and spokesman who fixes the pioneer-as-hero in culture by means of the printed page.

It bears stressing, perhaps, that the characters under discussion here belong to history, not to imaginative literature; for unlike The Great Lone Land, the narratives of John McDougall seldom invite the use of the concept of the narrative persona as an analytical tool. The "I" of McDougall's self-told tales is best approached as the recording medium of the historic individual, a medium that, whatever else it is, is through and through transparent and consistent. Similarly, in considering the concept of the hero in these writings, we are less concerned with processes of fictional creation than with applications of the concept itself to people John McDougall knew from his daily life. When, for example, he writes of the "true heroism" of his mother during the summer and fall of 1870, or describes his wife Eliza as "among the heroines of frontier life," we concede the praise intended, and let the matter lapse. There are no identifiable resonances of Biblical or epic or chivalric or picaresque or bourgeois traditions in these phrases, no attempts to align the particular individual with the main thrusts of literary culture since the dawn of recorded history. What the reader chiefly derives from the imputed heroism of these people is that they, as individuals, were to be respected and admired, particularly by Anglo-Canadians of the 1900's.

There are other occasions in the memoirs, however, when the word "hero" clearly refers to a process of character-creation in the mind of the historic John McDougall. Such an occasion occurs in the early pages of Forest, Lake and Prairie. There, John wrote of the experiences which early turned him into the Gospel democrat that he later knew himself to be. He begins by describing his association with the Indians of the Bruce Peninsula, writing, "My first memories are of these original dwellers in the land. I grew up amongst them, ate corn-soup out of their wooden bowls, roasted green ears at their camp-fires, feasted with them on deer and bear's meat. . . . Bows and arrows, paddles and canoes were my playthings, and the dusky forest children were my playmates." He then goes on, a page later: "Father had for cook and general servant a colored man, Isaiah by name. Isaiah was my special friend; I was his particular charge. His bigness and blackness and great kindness made him a hero in my boyish mind. My contact with Isaiah, and my association with the Indians, very early made a real democrat of me" (FLP, 12-13).

A "hero," then, can exert a shaping force on character, without himself displaying notable acts of high resolution or daring. The critical phrase here is "in my boyish mind": the mature John McDougall looks back on the formative influences of his present being, and recreates for his readers the stages of the growth of a mind. The first chapter of Forest, Lake and Prairie, in fact, consists chiefly of a succession of such influences: his first experience of the pain and sorrow of death in the family, an experience which "stamped itself on my brain"; his childhood witnessing of drunkenness in a backwoods settlement, "which made me, even then, a profound hater of the vile stuff, as also of the viler traffic"; and then finally this "object-lesson" in personal conduct, administered by his father:

> Once when I was walking with him through the Indian village of Newash, I saw an Indian under the influence of liquor come at us with his gun pointed. I was greatly startled, and wondered what father would do; but he merely stood to face him, and, unbuttoning his coat, dared the Indian to shoot him; and this bold conduct on father's part made the drunken fellow slink away, muttering as he went. Ah! thought I, what a brave man father is; and this early learned object-lesson was not lost on the little boy who saw it all.
>
> Whiskey, wickedness and cowardice were on one side, and on the other, manliness, pluck and righteousness (FLP, 18-19).

How comforting, we think, to have the issues so clear-cut, so neatly ranged on opposite sides; and we recognize at once the processes of mind which alone could have conceived and carried out the ambitious Methodist mission enterprise of the 1860's and '70's in the west. Without such conviction of the real existence of good and evil, right and wrong, the saved and the damned, heroes and villains, the work of the elder missionary among the Indians of the Edmonton area could never have been sustained. Nor should we ignore the evidences of a considerable degree of carry-over of these habits of mind in George McDougall's eldest son. At the same time, we do John McDougall an injustice if we fail to note his specific reference to "the little boy who saw it all." If, however, alerted by this and other similar phrases from the early stages of his autobiography, we keep account of the many instances throughout the memoirs on which he explicitly points to the growing maturity and complexity of his thinking, we are in a much better position to appreciate the full range of his accomplishment in portraying the two prairie missionaries, father and son, in their varying degrees of responsiveness to the long-range implications of their work.

"My parents were pioneers," John wrote; this being, as I have said, the first sentence of the first volume of his memoirs. Then, after noting the few details of his birthplace transcribed above, he resumed the story of his parents thus:

> My father was first settler, trapper, trader, sailor, and local preacher. He was one of the grand army of pioneers who took possession of the wilderness of Ontario, and in the name of God and country began the work of reclamation

> which has ever since gone gloriously on, until to-day Ontario is one of the most comfortable and prosperous parts of our great country.
>
> God fitted those early settlers for their work, and they did it like heroes. Mother was a strong Christian woman, content, patient, plodding, full of quiet, restful assurance, pre-eminently qualified to be the companion and helper of one who had to hew his way from the start out of the wilderness of this new world (FLP, 11-12).

His parents' story runs as a continuing sub-theme throughout the memoirs, culminating in the following passage from Opening the Great West, written some time in 1913:

> As we trotted northward that afternoon in 1875 father and I foresaw the change coming -- railroads, settlement, production, all in due time. Around our camp fires Mr. Sinclair [a teacher at Victoria] wondered at our optimism but he was a tenderfoot and had not the experience of frontiers later filled with people. Both father and I were privileged men in that respect. We were both pioneers from childhood and I the second generation of pioneers. Today as I write in my 71st year I am thankful and glory in my privilege of having been in on the ground floor of what counts in real life (OGW, 23).

Clearly, John McDougall felt that the pioneer need apologize to no-one for what his experience had made him. To be a pioneer was a "privilege" that he valued -- the privilege of "having been in on the ground floor of what counts in real life"; while to call someone else a pioneer was one of the highest compliments he could pay.

Only a few individuals of his acquaintance earned that tribute from him. One was "the kindly old pioneer Mr. Kitson" (RRR, 259); another was "Rev. Mr. Lacombe, one of the pioneers of this country" (RRR, 53). Then, too, there was his own brother David, "by nature and instinct a 'ready-made pioneer'" (PPP, 199). Twice, he accords his best compliment to the McKenzie family of Rat Creek, Manitoba: once when he describes them as "pioneers of the second degree"

(RRR, 202), and once when he writes, "The McKenzies were thoroughbred pioneers. Father had brought Kenneth, Sr. from Guelph to Manitoba in 1868 and here in 1875 in the farther west are a brother and two of Kenneth Sr.'s sons. First the backwoods of Ontario, then the fertile prairie lands of Manitoba and now into the great North-West. Verily the 'Star of Empire' takes its course" (OGW, 22). Or, as J. E. Rae would say, thus "a fragment breaks off and becomes master of a new region at a precise point in time," bringing with it a "value system or 'culture' [which,] once endemic and uncontested in the new region, . . . becomes a new point of departure, capable of inspiring new concepts, or creating a distinctive regionalism."[3] John and George McDougall, no doubt, would have been amused to see their old friends the McKenzies described as a "fragment"; they might have wondered, too, why the social historian felt compelled to put quotation marks around the word "culture" when used as a synonym for "value system". Nonetheless, the process that Rae and McDougall describe in their separate ways is undeniably the same one, as the Star of Empire moves westward from Ontario, transported in the mental luggage of the region's pioneers. Not by accident, therefore, did the sub-title of John McDougall's biography of his father George read, "Pioneer, Patriot and Missionary" -- particular words in a particular order.

When John McDougall put quotation marks around the word "culture," he generally had other significations for the word in mind: as, for example, when he wrote in Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe of "one of those 'highly cultured audiences' in one of our eastern cities" (SSS, 243). His sensitivity on this score probably dated at least as far back as 1894, when he read in one of Egerton Ryerson Young's letters of "the covert sneer that there is so much that 'is foreign to both time and scene,' and the boorish Western rudeness in his use of the offensive expression 'tenderfoot missionary.'"[4] Evidently stung, McDougall's rejoinder to this was that "in 1860, eight years before [Young] went to Norway House, there were Indians then living there who were (if one may judge by E. R. Young's letters and books and conduct) more civilized, and Christian, and cultured than my reviewer is to-day."[5]

The memoirs return to this theme, with the sneer somewhat papered over. In Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie, we read of how John, as "a learner," went to observe a wolf feast among the Cree, and was "both shocked and amused by what I saw":

> And now the race was fast and furious as to who should soonest swallow all that was given to him. The growling and snarling and gulping was terrible, and I was glad when it was over and one and another turned his wooden dish over. I had seen a wolf feast, but, as I told my friend the old Chief, I did not wish to see another. It was almost as nauseating as a drunken carousal amongst the cultured white men in the east! (PPP, 91)

In passages such as this, McDougall's writing displays its affinity with the typical humour of the provincial mind when, comparing itself with the products of larger centres of population, it wonders uneasily whether it is not in fact somehow inferior. Compared to the passage just quoted, however, and certainly compared to the unconcealed hurt of the letters printed in the pamphlet of 1895, there is a visible accession to command over tone in a passage like the following, from Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe:

> "Muh-ke-chees," or "the Fox," was another particular friend of ours, but one who clung to his old faith. He was quite a wag in his way and created a hearty laugh around our campfire by describing an imaginary scene, in which he was to have settled down beside the mission and gone into farming and stock-raising, but the crowd around us would go on in the old way, hunting and trapping. He would become wealthy, adopt the white man's mode of life, dress, etc. This would go on, and one day it would be reported that the York boats with their crews were coming up the river from their long and slavish trip to the Coast, the men in harness and working like beasts of burden as tney were. He would drop his work for a bit, and dress up in a neat cut coat and white shirt, and with hat cocked on one side just a little, and tobacco rolled like a stick in his mouth, with cane in hand, he would walk down to the river bank, and as the boats came up he would carelessly look over at his old companions, still in their primitive costume and slaving for others, while he was independent, and then holding the rolled tobacco between two fingers and turning on his heel, he would say, "Only a lot of savages, anyway," and then go back to his comfortable home (SSS, 208-9).

To ~~another~~ sentence, as well, from the Criticism of 1895 -- "Let me again quote from my very lordly and would-be gentlemanly reviewer" -- compare this anecdote, from In the Days of the Red River Rebellion:

> The first night out our camp was joined by some half-breeds who were on their way to where quite a number of their people were wintering near the edge of the woods. They occupied the other side of our camp-fire, and in due time my men and self engaged in our evening worship, and so did my man Johnnie, who was a Roman Catholic. The others across the fire did not, but quietly went on with their mending and drying of moccasins. When we were through and had made up our beds these half-breeds also in turn knelt in prayer, and presently Johnnie noticed them and remarked thus: "Oh, saying your prayers now, are you? Well, we have already done that on this side of the fire; that is enough for me tonight, for if the Lord is at all like any of the lords I have travelled with, and I have travelled with a good many, the less you bother Him the better He'll like you" (RRR, 159).

In the anecdotes of Fox and Johnnie, the sneer virtually disappears, as McDougall, entirely at ease with his materials, recreates a point of view typical of the residents of that time and place. For it is, after all, Fox and Johnnie who are the humourists here: John McDougall is merely recording (is he not?) what it was that amused their auditors. His readers can draw their own conclusions.

It is, in fact, in his ability to recreate this point of view, that John McDougall demonstrates one of the most significant points of difference between his own understanding of missionary activity among the Indians, and that of his father. There can be no doubt that the influence of the elder missionary pervades the memoirs of his son: as, for example, when John commemorates the accomplishments of Henry Bird Steinhauer at Whitefish Lake by writing:

> The absent missionary, the Rev. Henry Steinhauer, whose work was all around us, and which we are now inspecting, is a most glorious sample of the regenerating power of the gospel. Right out of the brush camp and birch bark lodge, right out of confirmed old-time faiths, as old as the generations of men, and at one leap and by one big bound he is across the wide chasm of the centuries, and stands out before all the world, a new man -- a scholar, a practical civilizer, a Christian gentleman, a man consecrated to God and humanity (OWT, 36).

That the passage is offered in connection with the tour of inspection of the Conference's General Secretary, however, is not irrelevant to its phrasing. This passage, from In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, is more typical of the memoirs as a whole:

> We rode into their camp the same evening. I can tell you, my reader, it was a glorious sight for me. My anxiety was now over, but, independent of this, the scene was full of life and romance, history and tradition. Reaching the top of the hill and looking down upon this moving town of buffalo-skin lodges, with its circles of tents, its hundreds of carts and waggons, innumerable travois, and many hundreds of horses

> and cattle feeding in proximity, it seemed as though the ideal nomadic life of the long past was before me -- Abraham and Isaac and Jacob with their flocks and herds; but this is even older, for the flocks and herds are still wild and free, and as yet belong to no individual. This is communal; the individual has not yet come in. It is our work to bring in the individual, and as I looked and thought, I saw even then that it would take time and great patience to make the change. The old was ingrained; it was in the blood many centuries before the source of all wisdom and prophecy had spoken, "Ye must be born again," and very slowly the quickest among men are learning the lesson, "Old things must pass away and all things become new." But we are now in camp among our friends, and one with them, and we adapt ourselves to existing conditions with the readiest of them (RRR, 68-9).

Set against the samples of spurious civilization identified elsewhere in the memoirs, then, the reader is to see in H. B. Steinhauer a "glorious sample of the regenerating power of the gospel." Steinhauer "stands out before all the world a new man -- a scholar, a practical civilizer, a Christian gentleman, a man consecrated to God and humanity." This is how he stands before all the world, at least, that John McDougall was capable of reaching with his published testimonial to an otherwise little-known individual. Yet that John knew Steinhauer to be the exception, not the rule, in the usual course of mission work among the Indians is the inescapable import of his writings; and this consciousness can be directly attributed to his acute sensitivity to "history and tradition," a sensitivity which radically qualified his understanding of how "the regenerating power of the gospel" operated on men.

Sometimes this theme took the form of direct statement, as when he wrote, "We can only move at a certain rate in the process of development; anything faster is hurtful in the long run, indeed is often suicidal; and the philanthropist or government that does not recognize this has not watched history nor yet given much heed to either God's or Nature's method" (RRR, 209). More often it was incorporated in the narrative, as in the passage quoted above describing the "moving town of buffalo-skin lodges" and the reflections which it engendered in the observer's mind; or, with greater attention to the human individuals involved, in a passage such as the following:

> Meetings were held morning and evening and all day Sunday, when the weather permitted, and we all worked hard. The veterans, Mr. Steinhauer and father, and Mr. Campbell and myself as juniors, did what we could to stem the tide of old life and turn it into the new. Hard work it was, and very complex, and full of details which multiplied every day, almost every hour, as only the worker and his God know. Let me say a word as to the personnel of our company. First, there was the old chief Sayakemat, who for years always had quite a following, but was now since Maskepetoon's death looked upon as head chief. He was altogether of a distinct type from the former; in the main well-meaning, but in no way assertive. He was a polygamist, as many of the older men were at the time. He and father were good friends, and slowly the old man was developing a desire for Christianity. Of the younger men who were coming up there were Pakan and Samson and Ermine-skin. These men were meeting the changing times. They had all the past as a birthright, and up to middle life constant practice in the rites of paganism; but now Christianity and civilization and the dawn of changed conditions are upon them, and unlike the older people, to whom these changes came slowly, these men will have to take part in a cyclone of civilization (RRR, 79-80).

In the passages -- and they are legion in the memoirs -- in which John defines for his readers "our duty for the time we lived in," the shared nature of that duty, as well as its origin in the pioneer, patriot and missionary who was both his chairman and his father, is never for a moment in doubt. Perhaps the most explicit statement of the two men's relations in this joint endeavour occurs in Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe:

> Thus the holidays came upon us in 1864 on the banks of the big Saskatchewan, far from the busy haunts of men, cut off from mails and telegrams and newspapers and a thousand other things men hold dear; yet in our isolation and frequent discomfort and privation we were happy. As father would now and then tell us, we were "path-finders" for multitudes to follow; we were foundation builders of empire; we were forerunners of a Christian civilization destined to hallow and bless many homes, and we were exalted with the dignity and honor of our position, and humbly thanked God for it (SSS, 252).

Not only the work, therefore, but the major thematic burden of the published account of the work, was George McDougall's legacy to his countrymen. John's legacy was the tact and modesty of his delineation of that work, and above all, his authority in conveying to his readers "the dignity and honor of our position."

The authority of the tone in which McDougall reiterates the long-range value of the work for God and country is not likely to be in question at this point. The tact and modesty may be. In case this is so, I would point the reader's attention away from the many instances in which the narration takes place in the first person singular (a not unusual circumstance, surely, in an autobiography), and towards two other customary usages in these memoirs. One is the attribution of a variety of rôles to the speaker, when he presents himself before the reader in the third person, as "the hunter," "the driver," "the missionary," "the worker," and so on. Two in particular of these rôles call for special mention. One is "the learner" or "the student," a rôle which he emphasized particularly in the early volumes. In Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe, for example, note the concluding sentence of the passage quoted below:

> The camp we came to had about two hundred lodges, mostly Wood Crees. They were glad to see us, and welcomed us right hospitably. We went into Chief Child's tent, and made our home there for the short time we were in the camp; but we may be said to have boarded all over this temporary village, for I think I must have had a dozen suppers in as many different tents the first evening of our arrival; and I could not by any means accept all the invitations I had showered upon me. While eating a titbit of buffalo in one tent, and giving all the items of news from the north I knew, and asking and answering questions, behold! another messenger would come in, and tell me he had been sent to take me to another big man's lodge -- and thus, until midnight, I went from tent to tent, sampling the culinary art of my Indian friends, and imparting and receiving information. I had a long chat with the grand old chief, Maskepetoon; renewed my acquaintance with the sharp-eyed and wiry hunter and warrior, Ka-kake, and made friends with a bright, fine-looking young man who had recently come from a war expedition. He had been shot right through his body, just missing the spine, and was now convalescing. My new friend, some four or five years after our first meeting, gave up tribal war and paganism, and heartily embraced Christianity. He became as the right hand of the missionary, and to-day is head man at Saddle Lake.
>
> Without recognizing the fact, I was now fairly in the field as a pioneer, and taking my first lessons in the university of God as a student in a great new land (*SSS*, 23-5).

And the other of these *rôles*, in addition to the *rôle* of student, is of course, "the pioneer" -- but "pioneer" in a very special sense, as a leader of men.

I have remarked already on John McDougall's consciousness of history and tradition as a factor in change, and the consequent reservations which he held in his mind about "the regenerating power of the gospel," or, in the more usual terminology of evangelical Methodism, "change of heart," as an influence on the broad course of development. H. B. Steinhauer was one example of what change of heart could accomplish in an individual; for that matter, his father George was another -- for it had been to his resounding conversion to the power of the gospel that George McDougall owed his career as an Indian missionary. John McDougall, too, was to write, in one of the later volumes of the memoirs, of his "act of consecration" to the mission work. It is clear from Forest, Lake and Prairie, however, that his conversion to his true role in life had taken place much earlier, when he was eighteen years old.

The anecdote in question is, unfortunately, too long to quote here in its entirety: "unfortunately" because it stands as a fine piece of autobiographical exposition. In it, McDougall relates a winter trip by dog-sled, from Norway House to Oxford House, a distance of 180 miles, which he, in company with his father and two Indian helpers, took in the winter of 1860. A novice at running behind dog-sleds, and yet determined to make the trip, John found himself last man in line right from the beginning. "Yonder was William," he wrote, "making a bee-line for the north, and stepping as if he were going to reach the pole, and that very soon, and Mr. Sinclair was close behind him; and I, oh! where was I, but far behind? Both spirit and flesh began to weaken."

The narrative goes on to tell how the party stop for refreshment, and then proceed on their journey. "Oh, my companions seemed to fly, while I dragged behind. Oh, how heavy those snow-shoes! Oh, how lazy those dogs! Oh, how often that old sleigh did upset! My! I was almost in a frenzy with mortification at my failure to be what I had presumed to think I was. But I did not seem to have enough spirit left to get into a frenzy about anything." Finally, after a long day of hard travel, the night's camp is made.

"My legs, unused to the snow-shoes' strain and the long tramp, are every little while causing me great pain by taking cramps. I do not say anything about this, but I think a lot. I know father understands the case, but except a twinkle of his eye he gives no sign that he thinks of it."

The second day is a repetition of the first, except that John is even more handicapped by the fact of having spent the night awake on account of the cramps in his legs. "My companions seemed to leave me almost at once. . . . The narrow winding river, with its forest-clad banks, was dark and very cold and dreary. . . . After a long time, a terrible time to me, the day sky began to appear. Slowly the morning dawned, the cold intensified. I was in misery. . . . It seemed for a little I would have to give up."

The narrative to this point has been episodic, both in content and in form: thoughts and occurrences are set down in order, as they happen, and often in paragraphs of one, or at most three or four sentences. Then, immediately following the sentence recording his imminent defeat, comes this long paragraph, followed by three more short ones:

> I was now a considerable distance behind my dogs, when, all of a sudden, a feeling took hold of me, and I began to reason in this wise to myself. What is the matter with you? You are strong, you are capable. What are you doing behind here, ready to give up? Come! be a man. And I stepped out briskly -- I began to run on those snow-shoes. I came up to those lazy dogs, and gave them such a shout they thought a small cyclone had struck them. Soon I was up opposite the island, and I ran away to its shore, broke a long dry pole, and after my dogs I went, and brought it down alongside of them with another shout, and made them bound off; then picking up the pieces of broken pole, I let them fly at those dogs,

> and away we went. Presently I was in a glow, and the stiffness in my limbs was gone, and soon I came up to my companions, and said, "Where are you going to have breakfast?" And they said, "Across yonder," pointing to the blue streak in the distance. "Well, then," said I, "why don't you travel faster, and let us get there?" William looked at me, and father turned round in his cariole to see if I was in earnest, and from thenceforth, on that trip as ever since, I was all right.
>
> I had found the secret. I had the capability to become a pioneer and frontiersman, and now I knew this a complete change came over me and has remained with me ever since.
>
> No more whining and dragging behind after that. My place was at the front, and in all the tripping and hardship and travel of the years I have kept there.
>
> When we stopped for breakfast, father smiled upon me in a kind, new way. I had come up in his estimation. I overheard William say to Mr. Sinclair, "John is all right, he has found his legs." (FLP, 85-96)

Taken out of context, certain sentences in this anecdote may well impress the reader as unadulterated brag; but read, as they were originally intended to be read, as the lessons of a long and extraordinary experience in life, they are nothing more than simple statements of fact. The "secret" was the knowledge of his own "capability to become a pioneer and frontiersman"; his own secret, as far as the reading public of Canada was concerned, until Egerton Ryerson Young issued his challenge, but thereafter public property for any who cared to make John McDougall's life an "object-lesson" for their own lives, just as certain individuals had served as "object-lessons" during his early years as a student and learner.

There is further evidence, moreover, of tact and modesty in the memoirs, beyond the merging of "the full glory of the individual 'I'" into certain significant rôles. This evidence resides in the use of personal pronouns, particularly "we" and "I". Consider, for example, the passage quoted above on page 265 describing the arrival of the missionaries in the Cree camp, beginning, "We rode into their camp the same evening." The passage moves with deceptive ease between what "we" did, in the prosecution of "our work," and what the scene meant "for me." In this way John achieves both distance -- "as I looked and thought, I saw even then" -- and identification: "But we are now in camp among our friends, and one with them, and we adapt ourselves to existing conditions with the readiest of them." While we may reasonably wonder whether George McDougall, entering the west at the age of forty, and thoroughly imbued with the limitations as well as the strengths of his background in Ontario, ever felt completely "at one" with his friends among the Indians, the memoirs strongly counteract such doubts in the case of his eldest son. Where George McDougall probably remained to the end of his life, therefore, a transplanted Upper Canadian, and a pioneer of the first degree, John saw himself as at once a pioneer of the second degree, and a Northwester: a man with "the stamp of the north and west in [his] walk and talk and actions" (RRR, 249).

This consciousness of belonging to the Northwest, McDougall dates in the memoirs as far back as 1869, when he had been almost ten years in the interior region; and his statement of this realization is worth quoting here, for it not only stresses, as do other passages in his writing, the primacy of experience over book-learning, but it also shows John McDougall retiring into the becoming modesty of the true authorial "we" -- for he is writing here of Pigeon Lake, where he worked for nearly six years independently of his father:

> We found our people and home all right, and at once fell into the routine of travel and work for the winter. When we had a congregation, either few or many, we lectured and preached as best we could, and around the camp-fire did some of our most effectual work; and God blessed us in helping men and women to a higher plane of life. Getting out timber and lumber, gathering fire-wood, hauling hay, keeping the pot boiling, and our time was fully taken up. Even if we had a study and books, there would have been precious little time for them. But as we see things now, our study was a big room wherein was all manner of strange life, and mysterious problems, and in the working out of the questions before us at the time God was teaching in His own way; at any rate He was giving us a grip of this wonderful country, and also of the confidence of the people dwelling in it. We were aliens no more in this commonwealth (RRR, 36-7).

XI

THE LANGUAGE OF THE LAND

"The pioneer of to-day is a misnomer," John McDougall wrote in On Western Trails, the last volume of his memoirs to be published in his lifetime. "There is no pioneering to-day. Then life was strenuous. Now it is luxurious" (OWT, 28). The year was 1911. McDougall had been issuing his books on western Canada's formative generation for nearly a quarter of a century, the still eye at the centre of a cyclone of civilization. The tone of the writing had perceptibly altered, losing some of its resilience, and taking on the waspish note that these remarks display. But the values at the core of the memoirs had changed scarcely at all, despite the onset of a new era in western Canadian development, heralded by the influx of immigration in the closing years of the nineteenth century, and propelled onwards by a new generation of publicizers and newspaper journalists. After the doldrums of the early 1890's, Westerners were bound on making up for lost time, and John McDougall, along with the remnants and descendants of his long-time friends among the Indians of the west, found themselves being treated as holdovers from a vanished past.

According to one visiting British journalist, whose book, Canada As It Is, was also published in 1911, there were still a few things in life which called for strenuous effort from Canadians of the time, despite the luxury which the aging McDougall deprecated. "The good folk of the Dominion," wrote John Foster Fraser, "are strenuously living down the reputation that they inhabit a 'great lone land.'"[1] Fraser was not sure that all their efforts in this direction were well placed. Admitting that the colony had much to offer British emigrants from a material standpoint, he nonetheless had a point to make:

> Now, whilst, of course, there is not the degradation and hunger and slouching armies of unemployed such as we are used to, there is in Canada -- except in Quebec, and, to a lesser degree, in Montreal, Toronto, and Victoria -- an absence of literary, cultured refinement, and too often a bragging ignorance that irritates.
>
> Heaven forfend that I should bring this as a serious charge against the Canadian. The marvel would be if it were not so. It is not the rich and the cultured of Europe who settle in Canada. It is the pushful and the determined. They have the faults of their virtues. I mention the point by way of a set-off to the cock-sureness of the Canadian. Culture will come in time, just as it has come in the more settled parts of the United States.[2]

His conclusion, especially after visiting the Lakehead and points west, was that for the time being Canadians, new and old, must be content to live in deeds, not words:

> Go, if your soul's eye can see beyond the shanties, the miry roads, the railway tracks in chaos, the humped elevators, the snorting and evil-odoured engines, all, indeed, that is revolting to aesthetic taste, to what these really mean -- the mastery of the West, where these giant plains, slumbering through the ages, are being roused to give bread to man. You won't find simpering drawing room poetry, but you will find the epic of the strenuous life.[3]

It was perhaps as well that Fraser did not bring "the absence of literary, cultured refinement" as a "serious charge" against Canadian life; had he done so, he might have found himself the target of one of John McDougall's thunderbolts. Nor would Fraser's catalogue of blots on the landscape have impressed him as anything other than hasty observation. The west, he thought, could withstand any critical examination on aesthetic grounds. It all depended on the observer's point of view: were the standards of "the rich and cultured of Europe" to become adapted to Canadian conditions, and Canadian experience, one could justifiably settle on the aesthetic of the Ontario pioneer as the arbiter of taste.

The aesthetic of the Ontario pioneer is not, at bottom, a very complicated affair, especially as it applies to landscape. As its basic tenet, it holds that beauty resides in that which can be made to produce. It is, for example, the standard behind G. M. Grant's almost invariable coupling, in Ocean to Ocean, of the word "beauty" with words such as "wealth," "fertility," and "opportunity." The reader may recall, in this connection, the passage from Grant's travel book which describes the countryside around Fort Carlton: "The country was of varied beauty; rich in soil, grasses, flowers, wood, and water; infinitely diversified in colour and outline. From elevated points, far and wide reaches of the same could be seen; here was no dreary monotonous prairie such as fancy had sometimes painted, but a land to live in and enjoy life" (OTO, 153).

At its most developed, this aesthetic takes the form of something like the following, again from Ocean to Ocean:

> [The Touchwood Hills region] is simply a series of prairie uplands, from fifty to eighty miles wide, that swell up in beautiful undulations from the level prairies on each side. They have no decided summits from which the ascent and the plain beyond can be seen; but everywhere are grassy or wooded,

> rounded knolls, enclosing natural fields or farms, with small ponds in the windings and larger ones in the lowest hollows. The land everywhere is of the richest loam. Every acre that we saw might be ploughed. Though not as well suited for steam ploughs as the open prairie, in many respects this section is better adapted for farming purposes, being well wooded, well watered, and with excellent and natural drainage, not to speak of its wonderful beauty (OTO, 120).

At its most explicit, it appears in the response of Rev. D. M. Gordon, travelling through Manitoba in 1878 and remarking, "It appeared somewhat monotonous. A level sameness of extremely rich farm land, however, affords a rather pleasing monotony. Only to the traveller in search of the picturesque does the country seem uninviting."[4]

Once again, the books of John McDougall permit access to the means by which this standard was transported and transplanted into the west during the region's formative years. Appended to George Millward McDougall: Pioneer, Patriot and Missionary is a little twelve-page essay entitled "Manitoba and the North-West." It begins:

> The reader of the preceding chapters will have wandered, in imagination, with us over an immense region of country. . . . As yet we have placed upon record but little concerning the natural resources of this big country. From father's letters we readily learn that he valued these resources, and always prophesied a grand future for this, the land of his adoption, and however sanguine his faith, none the less is ours in the solid material worth of this portion of our great Dominion.

McDougall then gives eight reasons for his faith in the future of the region which, even more than his father, he could claim as the land of his adoption. The first seven of these, which draw (at most) a few paragraphs each from McDougall, are size, climate, soil, pasture, water, minerals and timber. All these, beyond question, fit exactly his own phrase, "solid material worth." The eighth, however, and the one to which he devotes more than four of the twelve pages, is "appearance."

"This is a land of beauty," he begins. "The scenery is as varied as the country is large. Here is opportunity for the indgulging of every taste." Then, after several pages of enumeration and description of the country's varied landscapes, he brings his readers to the foothills country, writing:

> Like many an aesthetic Christian, we had been looking above [at the Rocky Mountains], and missed seeing the beauties and duties of lower life. Now these great hills attract our attention. . . . Take the Foot Hills from the Old Man River to the Athabasca, and they rival the most perfect natural scenery. Here we have mountains, prairie, woodland, river, lake, all harmoniously blended by nature, into a great, grand and ever-changing picture (GMM, 241).

The "great, grand and ever-changing picture" of the Canadian Northwest which John McDougall offered the readers of his memoirs was his contribution to the efforts of turn-of-the-century Canadians to live down the reputation that they inhabited a great lone land. It was not so much that the region had been so utterly transformed in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, although McDougall would have been the last to underestimate the magnitude of the changes that had taken place since that first busy summer of immigration in 1872. Nor was he inclined to overlook the aptness of "the great lone land" as a descriptive phrase for a region still marked by the absence of agricultural settlement. "Truly, this was the Great Lone Land," he would write (in just these words, or variations on them), on half a dozen occasions in his books, when he wanted to stress the sparseness of the region's population in the 1860's and early '70's, especially in comparison to the millions who would later come. Sparse as that population may have been, however, it was, to the discerning eye, a visible population nonetheless; visible, and significant, and, now that the flood of immigration was rolling in full tide, in daily danger of becoming totally submerged. Its main components, the Indians and half-breeds, along with the handful of old-timers who remained, had already, by the century's first decade, started on the trail to oblivion that would end in J. E. Rae's phrase, "another, sadder story." Aware that "the image of the immense meadows" still dominated the dream in the minds of potential emigrants everywhere, McDougall undertook to depict the Northwest as a scene replete with complexity and detail, history and tradition.

"How often are we amused and then disgusted by merely made up scenes," McDougall wrote in Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe, continuing:

> Someone who has been just long enough in a new country to be made a victim of all the designing wags in it -- who has just learned enough about Indians to make himself ridiculous every time he opens his mouth on the subject -- will don the buckskins of a pioneer, or the costume of the aboriginal Indian, and pose for one or the other; but the whole thing is forced and unreal. Here we have the genuine article, and each factor in the picture is complete and natural and true: the sweep of the valley of the Battle River which slopes from our feet; the ranges of forest-dotted hills, climbing one above the other, from the river's brink even to the limit of our vision; the intersecting fields of snow-clad prairie, reflecting each in its turn the brilliant sunlight; the buffalo that here and there seem like ink dots on the vast ground of dazzling white that stretches far and wide; and the great solitude of primeval nature that broods over all. Then the curling heavenward of the smoke of our temporary fire, the athletic and well-proportioned physique of the men, their costumes and paint -- I say all this was to my mind and eye, as I stood there and watched and waited that winter's day, as something just as it should be, belonging to the place and time (SSS, 258).

While landscape is one of the major factors in this picture, and thereby requires consideration in these pages, still there is another component to the completed scene: the evidences of human occupation of this landscape, as they strike the "mind and eye" of the watcher.

As far as the element of landscape is concerned, the memoirs show the aesthetic of the Ontario pioneer in full sway. From the brief allusion, in Forest, Lake and Prairie, to "the grand army of pioneers who took possession of the wilderness of Ontario, and in the name of God and country began the work of reclamation which has ever since gone gloriously on," McDougall progressed to passages like the following, from Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie:

> We drove early and late through the northern slopes of the great Saskatchewan valley, the lovely country which had so enamored my more youthful sense when first in 1862 I rode through its rich pastures and over its rich soils. Six years of wider range and larger view had been mine since then, but now as I ride over the many leagues my previous judgment is but strengthened. As we pass Saddle and Egg lakes and cross the Dog Rump, and Moose and Frog creeks, and wind between and over the Two Hills, and all the time behold fresh and picturesque landscapes, and note the wealth of nature's store, self-evident on every hand, my patriotism is enthused and my faith invigorated. And to one born on the frontier, and already having witnessed great changes, it is easy to imagine this easily reclaimed part of our great heritage dotted with prosperous homes. All day long . . . as I rode on in advance of my boys and carts, I was locating homes, and selecting sites for village corners, and erecting school-houses and lifting church spires, and engineering railway routes, and hoping I might live to see some of this come to pass, for come it would (PPP, 265).

We can be reasonably sure that the countryside itself changed little in those six years, between 1862 and 1868. What did change (or rather, develop in maturity) was the cast of McDougall's thought, as the response of his "more youthful senses" became overlaid by his growing consciousness of the west as a frontier of settlement. As a result, the region began to appear to him in its most intelligible light as "this easily reclaimed part of our great heritage."

It is, of course, in the processes of mind revealed in passages such as this that the work of the Methodist missionaries among the Indians has been most vulnerable to the criticism of later generations, both Indian and white. The aesthetic of the Ontario pioneer being thus explicitly aligned with the requirements of the agricultural settler, there is every temptation to set against the high-minded professions of Christian duty sprinkled throughout the memoirs, passages such as the following, from On Western Trails, regarding the function of the pioneer in unsettled territories: "Somebody has to do it. There have to be trail-makers and pathfinders; thus the world is explored, and in due time man begins his mission of subjection" (OWT, 61). A mission of salvation, and a mission of subjection, sort ill together, when the "world" in question is a region which has not yet been formally delivered over to the incoming farming population by its aboriginal inhabitants. There is no doubt that the most damning indictment which the descendants of the McDougalls' original converts have made over the past two decades is related to the part which the Methodists played in facilitating the "cultural dominance," in J. E. Rae's phrase, of whites over Indians during the transition period in the west. What the McDougalls attributed to God's plan, so this indictment runs, really resided in the dominant economic and political institutions of Anglo-Canadian civilization. If man's mission of subjection in the west were not to be troubled by resistance from the current residents, then the

Indians must somehow be eased into acceptance of their redundance, and Christian resignation to the will of God was as effective a lever as any.

From the hindsight of history, this indictment carries a great deal of force; but we are all much wiser in hindsight. In justice to the missionaries, it seems only fair to make note of what this judgment leaves out of account. For one thing, it overlooks George McDougall's extended experience on the frontiers of Ontario, first during the 1820's and '30's, as he joined his parents in the life-consuming struggle for existence in the backwoods; then during the 1840's and '50's, as he waged his own campaign on behalf of the Indians of that province against the indifference of his countrymen to the fate of the native peoples. In the end, the elder McDougall preferred to move on to Norway House and the west, where political organization among the natives still remained a possibility, and where the forerunner of Christian civilization could hope to raise the expectations of the people for just and considerate treatment. Furthermore, it also ignores the evidence, abundant in the memoirs, of a genuine sensitivity on the part of both missionaries, but particularly the younger one, to the complex attractions of the Northwest seen (in a phrase from George Grant) as "a land to live in and enjoy life." In John McDougall's understanding, enjoyment extended well beyond the delightful prospect of seeing steam ploughs chug across the level stretches of Manitoba; living entailed a wide range of mental and physical pleasures.

One of those pleasures was sheer sensual response to form and movement in landscape. Perhaps the most overt expression of this element in McDougall's personal make-up in this passage, from Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe:

> A glorious panorama met our view: precipitous banks, which the rolling current seemed to hug as it surged past them; then tumbling and flattening hills, which, pressing out, made steppes and terraces and bottoms, forming great points which, shoving the boisterous stream over to the other side, seemed to say to it, "We are not jealous; go and hug the farther bank, as you did us just now;" varied forest foliage, rank rich prairie grass and luxuriant flora continuously on either bank, fresh from Nature's hand, delightfully arranged, and most pleasing to the eye and to the artistic taste (SSS, 61).

That the eye was not the only one of the senses to become involved in the appreciation of landscape is evident in this passage:

> That beautiful region which stretches from the South Branch in a semi-circle northward and westward even to the mountains, and which is the scene of the meeting of the plains and woods, and where each of these great factors compromise the one with the other, forms a belt of country two hundred miles wide and many hundreds of miles long. Here we have a scenic land of woods and prairies of natural planting, with lawns and terraces, avenues and parks, and hills and dales wherein the eye and sense may revel for hundreds of miles. How often when coming out of the north country and reaching this borderland have I rejoiced, and as frequently coming in from the bare plains have I felt glad to alight from my horse in the shade of a sweet smelling and full-leafed grove. Then I cut the wild rhubarb and roasted it, and ate to repletion of vegetable diet, which my meat-laden stomach craved, and was satisfied. How extremely of the earth and earthy we are at the best (RRR, 81-2).

In other passages, however, the "earthy" part of John McDougall's nature gave way to other reflections, as in this account of his first sight of the Rocky Mountains, in January 1866, as he, his father, and Chief Factor William Christie paid a visit to Rocky Mountain House:

> Spellbound and in rapture I gazed upon the sublime spectacle before me. How supremely beyond my largest imaginings those lofty ranges stood revealed to the delighted senses. The clouds had disappeared, and in clear, distinct outline hundreds of snow-clad peaks stood out as if cut by a mighty diamond upon the dimly lighted morning sky. The beauty of the scene intensely moved me. The majesty and power apparent were most satisfying to my soul. The God who made these made me also. I felt exultant in the thought. But now the morning sun had clearly risen, and as I looked the highest peaks were illumined as by an electric touch, and scores of great beacon-fires seemed to have sprung into instantaneous being. And the great picture quickly grew. Snow-clad summit and glacier glint and granite wall and forest growth speedily became transformed as with the touches of a million brushes. Halos of light, radiant and grandly bright, spread themselves upon the mighty canvas. In rapture I beheld and worshipped. I had seen a glimpse of the glory of the Eternal, and still I lived. As I reluctantly left the scene and ran to catch up with our party over the foot-hills and across the wide valley beyond, I was elated above measure. What matter the cost in travel and cold and extreme hardship, I had seen the mountains, and the sight would be a perennial blessing in my life (PPP, 136-7).

Yet on the basis of further evidence from the memoirs, we may reasonably suspect that it was the aesthetic of the forward-looking Ontario emigrant which came to dominate over both the reverent Christian worshipper, and l'homme moyen sensual, in the make-up of John McDougall, as the prose moves without any visible sense of strain or incongruity from the satisfaction of the senses and the soul, to the projected satisfaction of seeing settlement and progress invade the west. From In the Days of the Red River Rebellion comes this passage:

> Truly the heavens above and the earth beneath were most beautiful and satisfying to our senses. The sweep of the valley, the windings of the stream, the autumn tints, the unoccupied fields and farms and lawns and terraces of the future, the natural placing of the clumps of timber, the smell of the land both wholesome and rich, the wild cattle to be seen here and there feeding or moving lazily down to the creek for water, the long beards of the bulls swaying rhythmically to their ponderous tread; yonder a wolf or coyote slinking from clump to clump of bush, or indifferently

> seated on his haunches surveying the scene, even as we were -- all this was before our vision, nor yet sign of any man with it. To our ears there came no articulate sound; a hush was upon all things. This was the time of day for quiet in nature, but in fancy we caught the rumble of waggons on well-travelled roads, the shriek of the locomotive, the hum of machinery, the lowing and bleating of herds and flocks, the tinkle of the cowbell, the ringing of the church and school bells. I could hear all these in anticipation, for verily the land before me was worthy and in good time it would come to its inheritance (RRR, 98-9).

The phrase, "aesthetic Christian," then, seems an apt enough description of John McDougall himself, the memoirs pointing to an appreciable degree of sensitivity in matters of "artistic taste." What the reader may still hold reservations on, however, with the passages just quoted in mind, is the range and subtlety of the prose in which this sensitivity finds expression. The land may have been "most beautiful and satisfying"; but what about the language? If our criterion of "literary craftsmanship" (which is the quality which Edward McCourt, by implication, denied to the writings of McDougall) is to be "the charm of descriptive diction," or "words which often rise to the level of poetry," how are we to justify the inclusion of these memoirs in the literary pantheon of western Canada?

With the question of prose style, we arrive at a central problem in the evaluation of John McDougall's writing. One aspect of that style, its strict avoidance of irony, I have already related to the documentary intent of the volumes, reflecting as well as defining the duty of the Christian missionary among pagan races. In the broader area of language per se, however, there reside qualities of these writings which are rather more difficult to assess than the casual reader might suppose. These qualities have to do with the shape and rhythm of the sentences, and with resources of vocabulary, as well as with fundamental attitudes governing the tones of the speaking voice. How complex these questions are, can perhaps best be indicated if I place before the reader of this study the proposition that, in the prose style of John McDougall, we are dealing with the writings of one for whom English was a second language.

In the course of his "kindly" criticism of E. R. Young's Indian Wigwams and Northern Camp-fires, John McDougall took vigorous exception to many of the Indian words used therein, as well as to the descriptions of war-dances and marriage customs among the Cree and Salteaux. "I have lived fifty-one years among Indians, Christianized and semi-Christianized, and heathen and entirely barbarous," McDougall wrote on that occasion. "I do not remember when I first spoke Indian. My mother says I did before I spoke English, and yet I never came across these 'marriage customs' which Mr. Young and other writers speak of." Young's retort to this was typically facetious: "But perhaps . . . I ought to accept his explanation for his mental obtuseness, when he admits that he knows more of Cree than of English, but even that proves mighty little." McDougall seems to have taken this barb somewhat to heart, for he closed off his rejoinder by writing, "But as he has reminded me that my English is imperfect, I will stop for this time."[5] Events were to prove, however, that the possibility of his English being imperfect did not long trouble him, for eighteen months after this exchange appeared the first volume of his memoirs.

In that volume, McDougall made a point of repeating a statement that he had made to his opponent in controversy: "My mother says I spoke Indian before I spoke English" (FLP, 12). He then goes on to follow up this intriguing snippet of biographical information with a thorough exposition of how complete was his immersion, for significant periods of his life, in the successive cultures of several Indian peoples. Forest, Lake and Prairie, for example, informs his readers that the particular Indian language which he learned as a child in the Bruce Peninsula was Ojibway. (McDougall also claimed, incidentally, to have learned French as well, while serving French-speaking customers in a store in Penetanguishene at the age of fourteen.) After a term at Victoria College in Coburg, he was again engaged as a storekeeper's assistant, this time in Orillia, with the special charge of conducting the trading with the Indians. "Having the language and intimate acquaintance with the life and habits of these people," he wrote, "I was as 'to the manner born,' and thus had the advantage over many others" (FLP, 49).

With the move to Norway House, Ojibway (known as Salteaux in the Hudson's Bay Lowlands) gave way to Cree. For two years John, now in his late teens, acted as schoolteacher to the Cree children of Rossville Mission, gaining the foundations of a course of language study that he would pursue over the rest of his lifetime. When barely twenty, he made the further move into the interior. Here, as he wrote in the second volume of his memoirs, he found "the whole scene . . . a study of life under new phases, and as I worked and talked I was taking it all in and adapting language and idiom and thought to my new surroundings" (SSS, 24).

This volume, which describes the events from 1862 to 1865, returns to the same theme at many points, McDougall emphasizing how, "as we were speaking Cree all the time, I was constantly improving myself in the language, and learning the idioms and traditions of the people amongst whom it would seem my lot was to be cast" (SSS, 132). By the winter of 1865, according to this account, he was finding it "easier . . . to speak in Cree than in English," explaining, "My brain and voice functions were almost in constant use in the former, and but seldom did I require them in the language wherein I was born." Cree was the language in use in the McDougall household at Pigeon Lake throughout the six years of John's marriage to Abigail Steinhauer; their daughter Flora did not learn English until past her third birthday, when spending a summer with her McDougall grandparents at Edmonton. It is not to be wondered at, then, that John should have encountered the situation he described in In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, regarding an incident which took place in the winter of 1868-9:

> I think it was at this time, essaying to preach in English, at the urgent request of the resident pastor, Rev. Peter Campbell, that I broke down. I had been using Cree for years, but now when I attempted to speak in my own tongue I was at a loss, so much so that I was obliged to sit down. My friend the pastor came to the rescue, and I know that most of the audience, being gentlemen from the outlying Hudson's Bay posts, thoroughly sympathized with me (RRR, 27).

Minor embarrassments of this nature, however, appear to have counted little in his mind when set against the rewards of his intimate understanding of the "language and idiom and thought" of the western tribes, and of the Cree Indians in particular. These rewards he notes at frequent intervals in the memoirs: as, for example, in his record of what Chief Sweet Grass said to him when he went to sound out the loyalty of the Cree camp during the disturbed times of the rebellion at Red River. He reports that Sweet Grass assured him: "We believe you, John; you belong to us, therefore you were not afraid to come the long distance and enter as a friend into our camp and lodges. Some of us have met you before; we have listened to you because of what you said, but more because of the way you have spoken even in our own language and as one of ourselves" (RRR, 172). From the same volume, too, comes the claim that the Indians at Victoria "always gave me a hearty welcome, for, as they said, was I not one of themselves in language and western experience?" (RRR, 48). And it was with obvious gratification that he noted the judgement of the Cree warrior Fox, that John was "both white man and Indian put together" (PPP, 181). The "very fluent Cree" that the ethnologist Lowie admired in McDougall in 1907, therefore, was the product of what by that time amounted to nearly fifty years of active use of Indian languages, principally Cree, in both spoken and written form.

McDougall's facility in Indian languages gave him a means of influence among the tribes that his father, who remained unilingual all his life, never shared. From this influence stemmed the request of Sweet Grass -- a request which has since become the focal point of controversy regarding the role of the Methodist missionaries in Indian affairs -- that John should advise them during the signing of Treaty No. 6, in October 1876. John's account of this episode, in Opening the Great West, is not irrelevant to the current debate over the signing of those articles of treaty:

> The next afternoon a messenger from the Head Chief Sweetgrass brought a request that I should go up to their council lodge. Having made sure that the request was bona fide, I went up the hill to the gathering of Indians. There I was taken forward to sit immediately beside the head chief, Sweetgrass introduced me as an old friend and the one white man he had found with an Indian heart. He had known my parents who were, without doubt the true friends of the Indian peoples. "Moreover this young man speaks and understands our language just like ourselves. I have sent for him to tell us what the proposals of the treaty mean, to give us fully what the white chief said, to go over all his promises and interpret them to us so that I and you, my people, may truly understand what was said to us yesterday. Remember that this young man whom I call my grandson has my full confidence and when he speaks I always believe him." Then turning to me he said, "Now, John my grandson, tell these Chiefs what you understood the white Chief to say when we met him y/e/sterday."
>
> Very carefully and minutely I went over my notes of yesterday explaining fully and causing my audience to see and understand what it meant. When I was through with my explanations the chief again approached me. "I thank you for what you have told us," he said. "Now I want you to go further and put yourself in our place. Forget that you are a white man and think you are, for the time, one of us, and from that standpoint speak out your mind as to what we should do at this time."
>
> For a moment I felt embarrassed. Then bracing up I first thanked the chief for his confidence and spoke fully of British justice and Canadian Government fair play. I told those chiefs and warriors what I had seen among the Indians of Eastern Canada. There they held their reserves among the white people and were living in peace. I predicted that the same conditions would come to pass in this country. I strongly advised them to go before the commissioners on the morrow and signify their acceptance of the proposals brought to them. When I was through I retired with a feeling of deep satisfaction that after sixteen years of association and intercourse with these western tribes that they had thought me to be worthy of their utmost confidence in deciding these affairs so vitally important to them and their descendants for generations to come (OGW, 58-9).

The debate over the signing of the treaties is one which will probably occupy historians of western political and social history for some years yet. The debate over the place of McDougall's memoirs in western Canadian literary history has scarcely begun. In order for such discussion to take place, however, we will have to arrive at a clearer idea than we now possess of what influence McDougall's standing as "both white man and Indian put together" may have had on the shape of the writings themselves.

One of those influences, for example, is suggested in the many anecdotes describing camp-fire entertainments in the camps of the Indians, where the exchange of exploits and the recitation of deeds of daring formed a major part of a culture that was both traditional, and oral. From routine participation in such "experience meetings," as McDougall called them, he gleaned much insight into the minds of the Indians; but from them, too, he undoubtedly learned to admire and emulate the best of the native story-tellers. As he was to write in *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, (in the sentence quoted, but not expanded upon, by J. E. Nix), "I have so often found this with native people, that to be as good as themselves in their craft, or even sometimes a little better, is the short way to their respect and very often to their hearts" (*RRR*, 48). The question is, whether the white man's culture, or the Indian's, is the proper context for evaluating John McDougall's prose.

It is difficult for the critic who is not conversant with the vocabulary and syntax of Cree to gauge the precise degree to which McDougall's personal experiment in multi-culturalism permeated his exercise of the English language, since the available Cree grammars are of little assistance to the uninitiated. Probably the best source of illumination on this problem is Leonard Bloomfield's transcriptions and translations of the oral narratives of the Sweet Grass Cree, made in 1925 and issued by the American Ethnological Society in 1934 under the title Plains Cree Texts. What these texts reveal, in the context in which I place them here, is certain usages in idiom and sentence structure which also characterize the prose style of the memoirs.

It would take a more thorough-going and informed comparison of the two linguistic styles -- the oral Cree of the Sweet Grass storytellers, as transcribed by Bloomfield, and the written English of John McDougall -- than I am competent to perform, to be able to arrive at conclusive results. Nonetheless, some details of similarity can be noted even by the novice linguist. One can learn to recognize, for example, in the Cree of the Bloomfield text, three recurrent words of narrative transition: "tapwa," which in translation appears variously as "really," "verily," "indeed," or "truly"; "akusi," translated as "accordingly," or "and so"; and "akwah," translated as "then" or "next." Their characteristic use occurs in narrative like the following, from page 189 of the Bloomfield text:

> "Truly, very glad am I that my son is alive! When it had been said, 'He was killed,' truly it is a joyful surprise to see my son!" he said to him. All the people greeted him and were glad that he was alive, and so, from that time on, they all thought a great deal of this young man. Accordingly it really turned out later that he became a chief.
>
> And so this is the end of the story.

Were one to make a statistical analysis of the memoirs, keeping track of the number of times the English equivalents of these three words alone, from the Cree of the plains tribes, occur in the English prose of John McDougall, their incidence would be found to be very high indeed. From passages quoted in recent chapters, many examples come readily to mind: "Truly she, as the wife of the wandering pioneer missionary . . ."; "truly, my little wife . . ."; "truly the heavens above and the earth beneath . . ."; "still this was indeed the Great Lone Land." "Potih" is also a recurring item of vocabulary in the Cree texts supplied by Bloomfield; and the English equivalent of this word, "behold!" is another striking feature of McDougall's prose (see, for example, the passage quoted above on page 250, from In the Days of the Red River Rebellion.)

The influence of Cree on McDougall's writing style, however, extends well beyond single words, making its way into the larger units of prose composition. Compare, for instance, these two sentences: the first from p. 187 of the Bloomfield text -- "When he saw him, 'Why, really, he does consume a big amount of food!' was the other's thought"; the second, from a passage quoted above on page 252 -- "More possible victims of either disease or massacre was the silent thought of some of us." Other characteristic constructions common to both the memoirs and Plains Cree Texts are those which translate as "what matter the . . .," "how often have . . .," and "even as . . . ." Although instances of parallel idioms and sentence structures are not as frequent as those involving individual words, they happen often enough to suggest a substantial clue to the usages and rhythms of the memoirs.

What this brief (and highly amateur) excursion into comparative linguistics is intended to show is that even in books consciously directed towards an English-language reading public, John McDougall retained to a significant degree the patterns of language, and therefore (if the lessons of linguistics are to be trusted), the patterns of thought as well, of the Cree Indian tribes. This characteristic of his writing suggests that, thanks to his half-century of language-study among the western Indians, McDougall was able to appreciate, as few Canadians could have done, the enormous complexity behind the web of human interactions to which we so casually attach the word "culture." Conscious of having absorbed two radically distinct cultures -- that of the Ontario pioneer, and that of the Edmonton area Cree -- McDougall may perhaps be forgiven if he allowed a note of asperity to creep into his tone when those ostensibly more 'learned' than he presumed to speak or write of the cultural deprivation of westerners, whether native or white.

McDougall's most pointed reminder of the uniqueness of his insight into the meaning of "cultivation" comes in Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie. I have already quoted the first paragraph of this passage in an earlier chapter, but I shall quote it again here, with its continuation:

> For the work I had to do I must acquire an actual knowledge of the country, I must gain the confidence of the people, I must learn their language and mode of life, I must become familiar with their history, their religion, and their idioms of thought; and here amongst these Crees and Stonies, living with them in their own way, I was being educated for the work God had in hand for me to do.
>
> A short time ago, in one of the favored cities of older Canada, a prominent lawyer asked me at the close of the service one Sunday morning, "What university did you graduate from, Mr. McDougall?" "The largest on earth," I answered; "all out of doors, amid the varied experiences of frontier life." "Certainly," said the lawyer, "it was a grand

> schooling, and you have profited by it." Thus God was training me. My teachers were Samson and Paul, Cree and Stony, Blackfoot and Blood, Piegan and Sarcee, and every Hudson's Bay Company officer and employee, every cultivated traveller and hardy pioneer and wild western empire foundation layer; and along with these the grand pages of the older Bible, as written upon the mountains and plains and forests and streams of this big new country. I was learning every day some needed lesson (PPP, 68-9).

The list of "teachers" which McDougall offers in this passage is suggestive, for it places to the forefront once more the second major component, in addition to landscape, on which his "great, grand and every-changing picture" of the Northwest was based. This component was, as I have earlier suggested, the region's resident population, the members of the commonwealth which he had come to know so intimately. And readers of the memoirs come to know them also -- not as intimately, by any means, as McDougall knew them in his time, but with a degree of familiarity that rather undermines the implications of J. E. Nix's statement, in the introduction to Opening the Great West, that "we do not always discern the minds of his companions or friends." Certainly, in comparison to the impression which we receive of [illegible] mind of John McDougall, the depiction of other figures in the scene is less immediate: but the effect is a relative one, for all that. What we do discern, beyond question, is a vital and interwoven community of individuals whose lives and characters are inalienably associated with the time and place that was the Northwest in the 1860's and '70's.

To enumerate the individuals who enter into this picture, in greater or lesser detail, would be a lengthy proceeding. Maskepetoon, Susa, Paul, Mark, Ka-kake, Mr. Firing Stony, Muddy Bull -- these are but a few of the several dozen Indians named and characterized for the reader of the memoirs. Of the half-breed population, there are also upwards of twenty mentioned by name, and presented to the reader either on the basis of their own individuality, or (as in the case of the following passage) in relation to larger issues:

> I fell to thinking about these people under whose humble roof we were camped. These were not settlers; no, no, only wintering. The head of the colony, Cuthbert McGillis, was a genuine type of the mingling of the two races, the careless, happy, plutocratic habitant with the nomadic Indian, the truly aboriginal man; a mixture of semi-civilization and absolute barbarism. A gigantic, curly-headed, splendid specimen of physical humanity he was, ever ready to fight anybody, but the friend of everybody. A life-long plainsman, a genuine buffalo-eater, he is now away with the men of his party looking for meat one hundred and fifty miles west of here. We have been friends ever since we first met. His big, hearty "John, my friend," rings in my ear as I write, and I often wonder that such men should ever have come to take the stand some of them did in 1870 and later. Certainly the trouble did not originate with themselves; of this my years of kindly intercourse and interdependence make me very sure. These are not the material out of which disloyalty comes as indigenous to the soil (RRR, 296).

Officers and employees of the Hudson's Bay Company also crowd the pages of the memoirs, while "hardy pioneers" and "wild western empire foundation layers" appear in abundance.

The last item on McDougall's list is the western terrain. In the passage quoted above McDougall calls this factor in the picture, "the grand pages of the older Bible"; ordinarily, he used terms like "landscape," "country," "scene," "topography" or "environment," as here:

> Doubtless environment has a great deal to do with the formation of character and being, but in the environment of these men /the plains Indians/, outside of buffalo and tribal communism, I failed to find anything that might be thought degenerating in its tendencies. . . . Apart from these factors in the life

> of this people, the rest of their environment was, in my judgment, of the nature and kind to help them, and to give them large, broad and fine views of life and all things. . . .
>
> Look at this delightful spot where we are encamped. . . . Behold the shapeliness of yonder range of hills, and the sweep of this vale at your feet. See the exquisite carvings of this ascent, and the beautiful rounding of that summit. Drink in the wonderful symmetry displayed in planting those islands of timber. Behold as yon fleecy cloud comes between the sun and the scene of sylvan beauty, how the whole is hallowed and mellowed by the shading of light! Think of the corrosions of ice and the cleansings of flood necessary to create such a variety of hill and dale as this. Ponder over the ages of later development, and calculate the layers of vegetable matter needed to make this wealthy soil and produce this infinite variety of flora and herb and forest and grass. Now to my mind all this is exceedingly helpful, and every time I look upon such environment I am made a better and stronger man. Then why not all men be thus helped and made better? All? -- there it is, our faiths are not alike. Even a wrong faith is mighty to the pulling down of "strongholds," and man under such influences descends.
>
> But even here there are exceptions, and environment has its way in a measure. Amongst these men and women you will come across those who are big and broad and grand and noble. Blessed be the Lord for this! And one of these latter even now is calling to me and speaking in broken English, "John Mak-e-doo-gal-un, come here now," with big emphasis on the "now," and I readily recognize the voice and walk over to the lodge of the old Chief Maskepetoon (PPP, 71-3).

Canvassing McDougall's list of "teachers," then, we find all categories well represented in the memoirs -- with one exception. That exception is the group he calls "cultivated travellers." John McDougall may indeed have learned "needed lessons" from such individuals; but what he learned must be extracted by inference. The Sandford Fleming party aside, the travellers that John McDougall met in the west, despite their presumptive interest for a readership whose knowledge of the region was based largely on the self-told tales of early prairie travellers, never enter the pages of his memoirs as characters in their own right. Instead, McDougall resorted to a variety of indirections which, taken in combination, suggest nothing so much as the final irrelevance of cultivated travellers to the picture of the Northwest which he wished to convey.

McDougall accomplishes their obliteration from the scene by several means: by reporting the repartee of Johnnie, who travelled with lords; by his account of Mr. O'B, up to the point at which he enters "a book descriptive of [the] journey [of] Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle" -- but no further ("I am done with him," John wrote in dismissal); by the open characterization of a type, in the words, "roystering, licentious, sporting aristocrat or eastern grandee, with his impudent assumption of superior make"; by the comedy of his encounter with the friend of Captain Butler; and finally, by the simple expedient of neglecting to mention their presence in the region at all. For the anecdote involving his meeting with Captain Butler's friend is the only time Butler is ever mentioned by McDougall, either as traveller or as author. The title phrase of Butler's book, as I have pointed out, does indeed enter the narrative when it is useful for a specific purpose. But neither the visit of Captain Butler to Victoria in the winter of 1870 -- a visit conducted, it must be remembered, not in the person of sporting gentleman, but as a representative of the Canadian government, assembling information to be used in the formation of policies to govern the expected settlement of the territory -- nor the publication of his famous book of travel, are accorded the status of 'events' in McDougall's autobiography. Except for that single reference to "Captain Butler, the author of 'The Great Lone Land,'" McDougall effaces both man and book from the historical record as he knows it, and as he would wish his countrymen to know it.

To my knowledge, there exists no documentary evidence, the memoirs apart, that John McDougall ever read The Great Lone Land: although, considering the abundance of his opportunity to do so, in the more than twenty years which intervened between the publication of Butler's book in 1872, and the publication of his own first installment of travel and adventure in the west, in 1895, it would be remarkable if he did not read it. Rather, the hypothesis which was advanced in the introduction to this study -- that Butler, both in his person and in his writing, acted as provocation for certain aspects of the later writings of John McDougall -- rests on coincidence: a plethora of coincidences, in fact, to which the indirections listed above are only the most visible clues. If Butler's description of the Northwest as The Great Lone Land, and his characterization of the missionary at Victoria as "a poor semblance of man," never encountered the eyes of John McDougall, and therefore had no opportunity to work on the mind and feelings of the younger missionary during his later life in the west, then it is only happenstance that the memoirs should so insistently define "the dignity and honor of our position"; the "respect and reverence" which George McDougall inspired in "both white men and red" in the entire western region; and "the kindly intercourse and interdependence" of the missionaries within their community. Only happenstance, too, that issues springing directly from the current debate, surrounding McDougall as he wrote, over attributes of culture, civilization and gentility in Canada, should so pervade the memoirs, especially as they related to the new society taking shape in the prairie provinces of the west. And finally, nothing more than sheer chance that McDougall should have taken such care to make his "picture" of the Northwest as detailed, as accurate -- in a word, as sharply-focussed -- as he was capable of doing, with the resources of vocabulary and literary training which his particular education in the university of God had placed at his disposal.

Those resources were not great. His formal education had consisted of two winters (after several scattered terms in backwoods schools) at Victoria College in Coburg. His language training among the Indians further deflected the direction of his mastery of English. Otherwise, his reading, until well into middle life, consisted primarily of the Bible, the church papers, and whatever incidental literature would have found its way into his hands -- and whatever that literature may have been, no discernible trace lingers in the memoirs, except in odd phrases. What chiefly dominates the completed picture in these memoirs is a feeling for decorum, and a passion for truth; both of them difficult, as he knew, to capture satisfactorily in the written word.

In Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe, John McDougall wrote:

> If these had been the days of the "kodak," I would have delighted in catching the picture of those young Indians as they stood before us, exactly fitting into the scene which in its immensity and isolation lay all around us. Both were fine looking men. Their long black hair, in two neat braids, hung pendant down their breasts. The middle tuft was tied up off the forehead by small strings of ermine skin. Their necks were encircled with a string of beads, with a sea-shell immediately under the chin. A small thin, neatly made and

> neatly fitting leather shirt, reaching a little below the waist; a breech cloth, fringed leather leggings, and moccasins, would make up the costume; but these were now thrown over their shoulders as they crossed the river. Strong and well-built, with immense muscular development in the lower limbs, showing that they spent most of the time on their feet, and had climbed many a mountain and hills, as they stood there with their animated and joyous faces fairly beaming with satisfaction because of this glad meeting, and that the missionary and his party were going to stay some time with them and their people, they looked true specimens of the aboriginal man, and almost, or altogether (it seemed to me) just where the Great Spirit intended them to be. I could not help but think of the fearful strain, the terrible wrenching out of the very roots of being of the old life, there must take place before these men would become what the world calls civilized (SSS, 75-6).

There is much in this picture that a kodak could have caught: the details of dress, and stance, and setting. Like George Grant, John McDougall valued highly the documentary value of a photographic record. No photograph, however, could have suggested, as McDougall's words here suggest, the implicit tragedy in this scene; the knowledge, reserved for the narrator, of "the fearful strain, the terrible wrenching out of the very roots of being" that await the young Indians he describes as "exactly fitting into the scene." Because the scene would change, they would no longer fit; and yet, as McDougall could not help seeing, they were "altogether (it seemed to me) just where the Great Spirit intended them to be." It is precisely because he wrote as "both white man and Indian put together" that the memoirs of John McDougall offer a perspective on the past which no student of Canadian civilization ought undervalue.

XII

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

In the second chapter of The Stream Runs Fast, Nellie McClung described what she called the "Humble Beginnings" of her writing career. It all started, she wrote, with a young man who came to Manitou in the summer of 1896, soliciting contributions (and subscriptions) to a new magazine. "The company, he said, was anxious to use native writers." Nellie continued:

> I liked the sound of that. I had never been called a native writer before. It had a patriotic appeal. . . . The young man . . . said writers were the great interpreters of a country. What Dickens did for London, and Scott for Scotland, he believed I could do for southern Manitoba. "We want you to hold a mirror up to this country; or perhaps a microscope," he said, "and you must feel free to write as you please. No one wants bare facts; no one is satisfied with bare facts; we want to light candles of imagination in the minds of our people." . . . [sic]
>
> I did not tell all this to Wes. He had a blunt way of puncturing some of my beautiful balloons and the worst of it was he was generally right. . . . So I held my peace but worked hard. I interviewed people, walked miles, dug into the newspaper files in the office of the Manitou Mercury, making elaborate notes and dreaming great dreams of what a native writer can do for a community.[1]

Nellie's community, of course, was the community with its roots in the wave of Ontario settlement which reached Manitoba in the early 1880's. Born in 1873, Nellie was seven years old when she came west with her family: young enough to have experienced the feeling of growing up in the region, but old enough to know, along with millions of others in Canada in the early part of this century, that the move west was part of her life. In 1908 came the first fruits of her hard work: the publication of *Sowing Seeds in Danny*, the first book-length work of fiction about the towns and rural communities of the west by someone who could, without unduly stretching the term, be called a native writer.

I do not mean to raise here the question of what relation *Sowing Seeds in Danny* bears to the literary history of the prairie provinces. Nellie McClung's thorough-going Methodism, in matters of art as well as of temperance, are well known, and need no elaboration here. I mention it merely to point towards developments in the future. Serious critical attention to the fiction of the west has traditionally put the humble beginning somewhere in the vicinity of 1925, with the appearance in that year of Grove's *Settlers of the Marsh*, Martha Ostenso's *Wild Geese* and, a year later, R. J. C. Stead's *Grain*: novels which all undertake to portray, in their various ways, the prevailing ethos of the community Nellie McClung began to appropriate for Canadian fiction more than twenty years before.

Sowing Seeds in Danny was far from being the first work of fiction published about the Canadian west, however. Peel's *Bibliography of the Prairie Provinces*, under Literary Works: Fiction, shows McClung's first-published book to be fiftieth in a list which begins at least as early as 1871; while a supplemental listing under Juvenile Fiction, going back even further in time to a book by R. M. Ballantyne in 1856, adds another twenty titles to the number of books of fiction published up to 1908. There are entries in both these sections which should catch the eye of the reader who has borne with the present study to this point. The twentieth entry in the list of Juvenile Fiction is one which reads, "McDougall, J. Wa-pee Moos-tooch," and the year of publication is also 1908.

Here, then, were two Methodist Canadians, long-time residents of the west, who, quite by coincidence, saw their aspirations to serve as native writers fulfilled in the same year. McClung's little book went on to become a best-seller, being published not only in Toronto, by the faithful Methodist publisher Briggs, but in the United States as well, by Doubleday, Page and Company. It ran through many printings prior to World War I, and has recently been reissued in paperback by Thomas Allen and Sons. McDougall's book of fiction was printed for the author by the Herald Job Printing Company of Calgary. I do not know how many copies were printed, or whether they all got sold; but except for the listing in Peel's bibliography, and the fugitive copies which have made their way into university libraries, the book has virtually disappeared from sight. Although part of the signal difference between the fate of these two books can be attributed to distribution and merchandising, a great deal more probably lies in the fact that McClung was riding the crest of the future in the community she described, whereas McDougall was looking backwards, seeking out, even more directly than in the memoirs, the roots of prairie society as he had known it forty years before.

Before examining (very briefly) John McDougall's single work of fiction, however, I shall be looking at the other item of particular interest from Peel's lists of Literary Works, the one which reads, "Butler, Sir W. F. Red Cloud, the Solitary Sioux. 1882." This, likewise, was the only work of fiction ever published by Butler. Peel classifies it as Fiction, but according to Edward McCourt, the book properly belongs in the category of Juvenile Fiction. In Remember Butler, McCourt had these remarks to make about Butler's tale:

> Red Cloud, or The Solitary Sioux is an exercise in nostalgia, an attempt to recapture through the written word the wonder, delight and melancholy of the great days which Butler had spent long ago on the prairies of the west -- the land which still claimed his heart as no other part of the earth had been able to do. The hero of the novel is a youthful Butler, and the tragic story unfolded that of the passing of the Indian. Red Cloud fully deserves its place on the shelf of better Victorian juveniles. It suggests that Butler, by reason of his lofty if at times quixotic idealism, his flair for the dramatic, and his lifetime of adventure in far away places might well have become, had his interest lain in that direction, a most successful writer of juveniles in the manner of G. A. Henty, although working within a framework of an almost precisely opposite set of prejudices and preconceptions. The superiority of the white man to the native, the Englishman to all other whites, was never part of Butler's belief.[2]

The practice of William Francis Butler and John McDougall as writers of juvenile fiction, then, is to be the subject of the present chapter. Unlike previous chapters, where the student of literature and the student of history were asked to weigh carefully their responses to a certain prose form, the non-fiction narrative of travel and adventure, the student of literature will be for a time permitted to work in single harness. Modes and themes of prose fiction are the central issue here, and they will be identified and described in terms appropriate to discussions of literary intention and achievement.

The initial clue to the intentions of W. F. Butler as a writer of fiction was provided, as was customary, in the sub-title of his book: Red Cloud, The Solitary Sioux. A Story of the Great Prairie. This wording was changed, in a later edition published in Toronto by Musson (undated: ca. 1911) to Red Cloud. A Tale of the Great Prairie. No generic subtleties lied buried in these variant phrases; all they do is serve public notice that a work of western adventure fiction is to follow. The intentions behind his choice of the title character, however, are somewhat more obscure. Red Cloud was no invention of James Fenimore Cooper. Throughout the 1870's and early 1880's, the original, widely-celebrated Red Cloud was very much in the news of the day, still leading his Oglala warriors in sporadic resistance to the American government's Indian Agency policy, although consenting as well to make periodic visits to the cities of the east coast in order to argue his case directly with the President and the press.

"Poor Red Cloud!" wrote Butler, pausing in the early chapters of The Great Lone Land to commemorate the turning of the first sod of the Northern Pacific Railway in June 1870:

> The immense plains of Dakota, the grassy uplands of Montana and Washington, and the centre of the State of Minnesota will behold ere long this iron road of the North Pacific Company piercing their lonely wilds. "Red Cloud" and "Black Eagle" and "Standing Buffalo" may gather their braves beyond the Coteau to battle against this steam-horse which scares their bison from his favourite breeding grounds on the scant pastures of the great Missouri plateau; but all their efforts will bein vain, the dollar will beat them out. Poor Red Cloud! in spite of thy towering form and mighty strength, the dollar is mightier still, and the fiat has gone forth before which thou and thy braves must pass away from the land! (GLL, 68-9)

That Butler himself was, at the time of writing, another beleaguered individual of towering form and mighty strength who also stood defeated, momentarily at least, by the even mightier dollar, may or may not have had something to do with his fellow feeling for the Indian leader. In any event, the name of Red Cloud is mentioned this once only, in the first of Butler's two narratives of Northwest travel. In The Wild North Land, however, Butler let Red Cloud make a brief return appearance.

The narrative is all but over when Red Cloud's name enters the text of The Wild North Land, Butler having just posted notice of his impending exit: "For many reasons it is fitting to end this story here. Between the ridge on the west shore of the Frazer and those scattered wooden houses on the east, lies a gulf wider than a score of valleys. On one side man -- on the other the wilderness; on one side noise of steam and hammer -- on the other voice of wild things and the silence of the solitude" (WNL, 334-5). Then, almost immediately afterwards, comes this pointed anecdote:

> One evening I stood in a muddy street of New York. A crowd had gathered before the door of one of those immense buildings which our cousins rear along their city thoroughfares and call hotels. The door opened and half a dozen dusky men came forth.
>
> "Who are they?" I asked.
>
> "They are the Sioux chiefs from the Yellowstone," answered a bystander; "they're taking them to the the-a-tre, to see Lester Wallick."
>
> Out on the Great Prairie I had often seen the red man in his boundless home; savage if you will, but still a power in the land, and fitting in every way the wilds in which he dwells. The names of Red Cloud and his brother chiefs from the Yellowstone were household words to me. It was this same Red Cloud who led his 500 whooping warriors on Fetterman's troops, when not one soldier escaped to tell the story of the fight in the foot-hills of the Wyoming Mountains; and here

> was Red Cloud now in semi-civilized dress; but still a giant 'midst the puny rabble that thronged to see him come forth; with the gaslight falling on his dusky features and his eyes staring in bewildered vacancy at the crowd around him. Captain Jack was right: better, poor hunted savage, thy grave in the lava-beds, than this burlesque union of street and wilderness! (WNL, 336)

It would appear that Red Cloud didn't agree with Captain Jack. He lived on until 1909, passing away on the Red Cloud Agency, at the age of eighty-seven, less than a year before Butler himself died in Tipperary. What happened to the historial Red Cloud after that single, alleged encounter on the streets of New York, however, has no particular bearing on the critical analysis of Butler's fiction; for the Red Cloud of the book bears no resemblance whatever to the redoubtable Sioux chief who so stubbornly insisted on the right of his people to live rather than sink into their graves in the lava-beds.[3]

Red Cloud, The Solitary Sioux falls within an ever-popular category of fiction, the story of a young man's education. The young man in question is the book's narrator, an Irish lad who enters the main action of the story bereft of parents, of fortune, of prospects, and -- inconveniently for the commentator on this book -- of name as well. Anonymous from beginning to end, the narrator proceeds to recount how he learned to look deep into the soul of Nature, with Red Cloud as his guide and mentor; how he came to understand his place in the world; and how Red Cloud helped him to become fully fitted for that place. It all adds up to a series of practical lessons in survival: as editors of the publishing firm of Musson in Toronto astutely recognized when they asked Robert Baden-Powell to provide an introduction to the Canadian edition of 1911. "To the Boy

Scouts," at the beginning of this edition, gives Baden-Powell's estimate of the book's "valuable lessons" for young readers in Canada:

> Any boy reading Red Cloud will find Sir William's own experiences in Canada recorded in it, and these are full of valuable lessons if you will only look out for and remember them. His account of his attack on the eagle's nest teaches you how to observe and plan your way over difficult ground; the story of the wounded Indian brave shows how much a man can endure if he will only use the Scouts' motto, "Never say die till you're dead"; the resourcefulness of the hunters in finding their way in a wild country, in stalking the moose, in fighting the Indians, all have their lessons for you. The value of pluck and endurance, and the running of any risk to help a comrade -- all these points are shown in this true story to anyone who will only take care to notice them.
>
> These are the points that go to make up manliness. It does not matter that you are a good player at footer or captain of cricket; you are not going to do much good in the world if you have not manliness. This is picked up most readily in life in "the wild," and by carrying out the practices of the hunters and scouts of the forest and prairie; but it is not so easy to gain in peaceful and civilized cities.
>
> And that is just where a book like Red Cloud comes into the training of the Boy Scouts. In these pages they learn all they can of the same sort of training as that which the young frontiersman gets in his wilder life -- the training which is described by Sir William Butler, and which, when learnt, turns out honourable, fearless men, ready to sacrifice themselves at any moment to save a friend or to help their country (RC, xi-xii).

That the nameless narrator of Red Cloud bears certain points of resemblance to the book's author is biographically suggestive, but critically irrelevant. That he has much in common with the narrator of The Great Lone Land and The Wild North Land is rather more to the point. At seventeen years of age, the young man who is the speaking voice in the book is thrown entirely on his own resources, an orphan. With only "a few hundred pounds" and a half-dozen momentoes to his name, he resolves on a new life:

> It was to be a life of wandering in the great wilderness of Western America. I had formed from books a pretty accurate idea of the great divisions of the Northern Continent of America which yet remained in the domain of untamed nature. I knew that far beyond the last settler's hut there lay a vast region of meadow, which finally gave place to a still vaster realm of forest, which in time yielded dominion to a wild waste of rock and water, until the verge of the Polar Sea. I knew too that these great divisions held roving and scattered tribes of Indians, sometimes at war with each other, always engaged in the pursuit of the wild beasts and birds whose homes were in those untamed wastes. More I did not need to know. I had trust, firm trust, in this great Nature, her lonely hill-tops, her wild lakes. The sighs of winds across November moors had had for me no sense of dreariness, no kinship with sorrow. Why should I dread to meet this world, whose aspects I loved so well, in the still wilder and grander scenes of an empire where civilized man was a total stranger? (RC, 25-6)

Accompanied only by his faithful retainer, Donogh, the narrator makes his way to an un-named destination on "the confines of civilization," where

> a kind of frontier settlement, half wigwam, half village, had sprung up to meet the wants of those traders in furs and peltries who form the connecting link between the red man of the wilds and his white brothers in civilization. This settlement marked, as it were, the limits of the two regions -- on one side of it lay judge and jury, sheriff, policemen, court-house, and fenced divisions; on the other, the wild justice of revenge held empire, and the earth was all man's heritage (RC, 30).

Still trusting in Nature, Donogh and the narrator set out westward from this settlement (which, as well as being unlocated in geographical or political terms, is also left floating free, as it were, in any historical context -- there are no dates mentioned in the narrative):

> We ate our supper that night with but few words spoken. The scene was too strange -- the outlook too mysterious, to allow thoughts to find spoken expression.
>
> Had I been asked that night by Donogh to define for him the precise objects I had in view in thus going out into the wilds, I do not think that I could have given a tangible reason. I did not go as a gold-seeker, or a trapper of furs,

> or a hunter of wild animals. We would follow the chase, trap the wild animals of the streams or marshes, look for gold too; but it was not to do all or any of these things that I had left civilization behind me. This great untamed wilderness, this home of distance and solitude, this vast unbroken dominion of nature -- where no fence crossed the surface of the earth, where plough had never turned, where lakes lay lapped amid shores tenanted only by the moose and the reindeer -- all this endless realm of prairie, forest, rock, and rapid, which yet remains the grandest domain in savage nature in the world, had had for me a charm, not the less seductive because it could not then find expression in words, or give explanation for its fancy. Enough that we went forth with no sinister object in view against man or beast, tree or plain; we went not to annex, to conquer, nor to destroy; we went to roam and rove the world, and to pitch our camps wheresoever the evening sun might find us (RC, 32).

It is to be regretted that such nobility of purpose should have to contend with the evil ways of lesser men. But it does, of course, and that very soon. Three days out from the frontier settlement, the two young men awake to find two of their four horses missing, stolen by Indians during the night. Do they then turn back to the settlement, where judge and jury, sheriff, policemen and courthouse reign supreme, and where they can consequently claim the protection of the law? The thought never enters the narrator's mind. Instead, he addresses the problems which this untoward turn of events has created for himself and Donogh:

> As I sat there I thought over the length of time we must now take to reach the distant prairies of the west, and my heart sank at the prospect of slow and weary travel, with the chances of further losses that would leave us helpless upon the vast plains.
>
> As I sat thus brooding upon our misfortunes I noticed one of the horses raise his head from feeding and gaze steadily back upon our trail. Looking in that direction I saw a solitary figure approaching upon horseback (RC, 38).

This opportune visitor to their camp is, of course, none other than Red Cloud, the Solitary Sioux. With little waste of time the Indian and the Irishman become fast friends. Red Cloud's story is quickly told. He is on the trail of a villainous trader who, nine years before, betrayed his father to the Americans, at whose hands he met an unmerited death as a traitor. Red Cloud is bent on revenge, so that his father's spirit will be at peace. In return for this confidence, the narrator tells Red Cloud of his proposed wanderings in the wilds, now unfortunately complicated by the loss of the horses. Red Cloud's answer is immediate: "You are the first white man I have ever met who came out to this land of ours with the right spirit. You do not come to make money out of us Indians; you do not come to sell or to buy, to cheat and to lie to us. White men think there is but one work in life, to get money. . . . I can get you new horses in place of the old ones" (RC, 40).

Moreover, he has a further offer to make to his new young friends: "If you like . . . to learn the life of the prairie, I will teach it to you" (RC, 40). Which he does, with commendable thoroughness, for the next two hundred and fifty pages of the story. The narrator and Donogh learn all the valuable lessons in Baden-Powell's list: how to stalk moose, fight Indians, and above all, never say die till you're dead. It's all (Red Cloud explains) part of an Indian's regular training for his life's work:

> "It is in such things /hunting wapiti/ that we learn the great work of war. To ride a chase to the end; to shoot an arrow fast and true after a six-mile gallop; to watch every turn of the game enemy, and to note every stride of the steed; to

> avoid the deadly charge of the buffalo, and to wheel upon his flank as he blindly pursues his impetuous onset; to stand steady before the advance of the savage grizzly bear, and to track the wary moose with silent footfall into the willow thickets -- these are the works by which, in times of peace, the Indian learns his toil in the deeper game of war.
>
> "And then, the health, the strength, the freshness of these things; the pleasure they give us in after-time when by the camp fire in the evenings we run back in memory some day of bygone chase. Well, now we have other work to do. . . . We must be away" (RC, 62-3).

Lest the reader be in some doubt, this is Red Cloud speakihg. His command of English is excellent -- as good as the narrator's own, in fact -- for he has been "brought up a Christian, educated in a school far away in Canada with white people, and taught the uselessness of contending with civilization; but what of that? Blood is stronger than civilization . . ." (RC, 45)

So the narrator's education in manliness proceeds apace, as the small party travels ever westward towards the mountains, picking up recruits as they go: a wounded Cree, a turn-coat Assineboine, and "a large shaggy hound, half deer, half wolf-dog," which belongs to Red Cloud. (This dog, incidentally, has the gift of canine mitosis -- having joined the party with his master in mid-summer, by the first snow-fall he has managed to become an entire train of sled dogs, fully trained and ready for service.) While the narrator perfects his education in the lore of the wilds, however, Red Cloud has other business in hand -- his plans for exacting his revenge on the trader McDermott.

The story advances in a series of plots and counterplots -- cunning traps brilliantly foiled, horrible deaths narrowly evaded -- as Red Cloud and his enemy McDermott pursue each other over immense portions of the entire Northwest. Here, the narrator comes to realize, is par excellence the deeper game of war. The realization does not dismay him in the least. Instead, it appeals to a feeling natural in one who was born the son of a soldier, and was raised on the military tales of a veteran of the Peninsula Wars. He muses: "It was a curious group this, that now held its course into the western wilds. There were representatives of three of those strange families of the aboriginal race of North America . . . and two white men from a far-distant land, alien in race, strange in language, but bound to them by a sympathy of thought, by a soldier instinct which was strong enough to bridge the wide gulf between caste and colour, and make red and white unite in real brotherhood" -- the brotherhood, that is, of war (RC, 146).

It is at a very late stage in the adventure that the three Indians in this "curious group" are augmented by a fourth. This new arrival, who appears out of the darkness one winter night to warn Red Cloud that his enemy has in train yet another plot to secure his demise, identifies himself as "Maskeypetoon the Iroquois." Finding Red Cloud puzzled as to what an Iroquois might be doing in the foothills of the Rockies, Maskeypetoon explains that "although a remnant of my race still dwell by the shores of the St. Lawrence . . . for me it would not do. . . . In my own land I was a stranger, in this strange land I found myself at home" (RC, 204).

With this addition, Red Cloud's little band is complete, and the pace of the action accelerates towards the moment of crisis. McDermott the trader musters the support of an entire war party of

Sircie Indians to his cause, and it is these auxiliary forces which carry out a surprise attack on Red Cloud's encampment, killing two of the party's number -- the unfortunate Cree, and the narrator's lifelong servant and friend, Donogh. "Your poor brother's name is one more added to the long list that cry for vengeance," Red Cloud informs the grief-stricken narrator. But there is no time for mourning; the four remaining members of the party must seek safety from the pursuing Sircies and their instigator, McDermott. Red Cloud leads his friends to a place of refuge in the mountains. This, Red Cloud informs them, is "the only place I can call my home in all this great wilderness," and it is his home because there he has buried the bones of his murdered father (RC, 290).

The topography of this sacred spot must be clearly comprehended by the reader, since it is instrumental in the resolution of the plot. Here is Butler's own description:

> We gained at last a beautiful level meadow, set round on all sides by lofty hills, backed by still loftier mountains. A small clear lake occupied one end of this level plain.
>
> We had . . . . entered the valley of the parent stream of the Saskatchewan, which here, after passing through the lake, foamed down a ledge of rock, precipitating into waters perpendicularly from a great height into a deep pool, with a roar that was audible at the farther end of the valley.
>
> Above this fall a small rocky island stood in the centre of the river. One end of this island was level with the edge of the cataract; the other was in smooth water. . . . As the water approached the edge of the fall it ran in many eddies and rapids, but at the end nearest to the lake the stream was smooth enough to permit a canoe to reach the island (RC, 289-90).

From this description, the wide-awake reader will have little difficulty in anticipating the general outlines of Red Cloud's plan for the destruction of his pursuers. Right on cue, the Sircies appear on the shore of the lake, and whoop with satisfaction at having trapped their quarry on the island. Building a raft, they attempt a night-time landing on the island -- but Red Cloud and his friends are waiting in ambush. In their consternation at being met by gunfire, and unfamiliar with the currents of the stream, the Sircies lose control of their craft. Let Butler, however, tell of their horrible fate:

> Eagerly we looked through the murky atmosphere where the raft had been. . . . We could see many confused figures trying with might and main to get the unwieldy craft to the side of our rock. It was only for a short second, and then the raft was borne along into still rougher and faster waters, to be caught in the remoseless grasp of the furious torrent above the falls, now swollen by the thunder deluge of the night.
>
> We could see no more, the trees hid it from sight, but we had no need for further eye-witness or ear-witness of the fate of the raft and crew. Once in the grasp of that torrent there could be no escape. High above the roar of the cataract one loud cry did indeed reach us a very few seconds later, and then there was silence, only broken by the swirl of eddy, the rush of water against the rock, and the dull thunder of the fall (RC, 305-6).

Yet the drama does not quite end here. Among the attacking party had been the trader McDermott, for whom there is reserved a special punishment. Alone among the occupants of the raft he has managed to secure a place on a small rock on the brink of the falls, and here he spends the night expecting every moment to be swept to his death by the rising waters of the river. He is still there when Red Cloud and the narrator go at daybreak to inspect the results of their night's work.

On first seeing McDermott's perilous situation, the narrator confesses that "my heart grew hard" at the thought of "my poor murdered Donogh"; but this fleeting impulse is succeeded by "the whisperings of a better nature, and the terrible spectacle before me chased away the promptings of revenge" (RC, 307). Not so Red Cloud. "Turning to the Sioux I exclaimed, 'Can we save him? Can we reach him by any means?' But I had little counted on the real depth of the anomosity with which Red Cloud regarded his enemy. 'Save him? Reach him?' he cried. 'Do you imagine that if I could reach him I would let yon torrent rob me of his death?'" And Red Cloud, seizing his gun, prepares to exact the red man's revenge for the death of his father. But the narrator intervenes. "'Forbear,' I cried, striking up the levelled barrel. 'He is in the hands of Him who has said, Vengeance is Mine. See, through all these long years you strove to compass his punishment, and you failed; but now here, within sight of the grave of his victim, a mightier Power has brought him to his doom'" (RC, 309). The narrator is immediately proven to be right; for as soon as these words are spoken, the mightier Power takes over the job of execution. "The rising waters . . . . completed their task; the trader [was] swept into the terrible abyss." And Red Cloud concurs in the propriety of this schema; lowering his rifle, he says, "You are right. . . . We are but the children of the Great Spirit. We see the beginning of the trail; He alone can foresee the end."

Thus Nature, whom the narrator has trusted without remission from the time he left Ireland, once more confirms him in the rightness of his faith. Neither the justice of the frontier settlement far to the east, nor the justice of the Indian, which is revenge, gain the final sanction of the Great Spirit in these remote regions. Here, natural justice alone prevails.

What is more, Nature has one more part to play in the working out of this drama. With McDermott's death, Red Cloud declares that his life's ambition has been achieved; whereupon the narrator proposes that the two of them wander the wilderness together. Red Cloud refuses, however -- the boy's life, he maintains, properly belongs to the wide world beyond the prairies. But there is one small difficulty: "This wild life, while it taught the lessons of bravery, hardihood, endurance, activity, and energy, did not bring worldly wealth to those who followed it. I had come to the prairie poor. I would leave it even poorer still" (RC, 311). How is he to manage in the white man's world, which, according to Red Cloud (and the narrator does not contradict him) is one where wealth is the prime objective in life? "A white man without that yellow stone [i.e., gold] is like an Indian who has no buffalo," Red Cloud tells the narrator. "You are nothing if you have it not. All your courage, your friendship, your energy, will count for little if you have not plenty of these yellow stones" (RC, 315). And with these words Red Cloud bestows on his young friend his last act of disinterested beneficence -- the contents of a secret gold mine.

His difficulty solved, the narrator now has a new proposal to make: will not Red Cloud help him to spend this gold, in a life of travel and adventure all over the world? But Red Cloud has irrevocably accepted his fate, which is, quite simply, to die.

"'My brother,' he said, 'it would not do. The great prairies are dying; the buffalo are going. The red man must pass away too.'" And so the two sworn brothers agree to go their separate ways:

> "See," he said, "the smoke of your people's fires far below, there is your road, and here is mine" -- he pointed to the mountain trail. "I could not go with you, I would have to begin life again. I am too old to change now. There is no one to come after me. The Sioux are nearly all gone, the buffalo are fast going; but the wilderness will last long enough for me."
>
> And is there nothing then that I can do for you?" I said. "You have done everything for me: let me do something in return."
>
> "Well, my friend," he replied, "sometimes think of me. When I am camped at night far out on the great prairie I would like to say to myself, my white brother remembers me. That is all" (RC, 321).

For many of Butler's original readers, no doubt, a fitting denouement to the story, this parting of the ways of the red man and the white. Reading this tale in their peaceful and civilized cities (perhaps between footer or cricket matches), they could learn valuable lessons in plenty. Most obvious of these were the lessons which the narrator himself had ennumerated, "the lessons of bravery, hardihood, endurance, activity, and energy." Then, too, there were the lessons which Baden-Powell hoped to see impressed on the Boy Scouts of Canada. Finally, readers of this tale of the Great Prairie could learn to place their trust in Nature, not only to see that villains were punished, but to see that heroes were rewarded handsomely for their selfless sacrifices for a friend. Should that friend be a Red Man, however, there was nothing more asked of his white brother than that he think of him occasionally. Although fully aware that, like the buffalo, he was fast disappearing, the Red Man nonetheless harboured no resentment; obedient to the designs of the Great Spirit, thoughts of revenge and resistance had been wiped from his mind. All that remained for the individual white man was to remember that the Red Man once existed, to honour his memory, and to think with pity over his fate. It was hard, but it was right.

When John McDougall took up the cudgels as critic in the columns of the Christian Guardian in 1893 and 1894, he was essentially criticizing the practice of E. R. Young as a recorder of history, attacking Indian Wigwams and Northern Camp-fires on points of fact. His main irritation with the book lay in its advertised claims to stand as an accurate portrayal of a time and place, when, to his eyes, the anecdotes contained therein looked a good deal more like made-up scenes. It is clear, however, that what particularly galled his kibe was not just the stories themselves, but their source. Young put himself before the general public of Britain and Canada as a practising minister of the Methodist church, when it was evident to McDougall at least that what Young specialized in was tall tales. In his Criticism, McDougall tells of how confusion had arisen in the minds of visitors to the west between E. R. Young and George Young of Winnipeg, the reputation of the former as "the man who tells the whoppers" having been unfairly pinned on the latter. Wrote McDougall tartly to the editors of the Christian Guardian:

> If I had taken the course Mr. Young has, I would have resigned from the Methodist ministry and sent in my ordination parchment long ere this. Let Mr. Young stand on his own two feet [i.e., without the camouflage of his work as a minister], and then he may write all the books of

> fiction and tell all the stories he pleases, but even then I would advise him to "call a spade a spade," and not imagine it is something else.[4]

If E. R. Young was at all impressed by this advice, his subsequent publishing career shows no sign of it. In 1895, the year of McDougall's first installment of his version of the critical period in western Canadian affairs, there appeared English and American editions of a little book of fiction which Young had had published in Toronto the previous year, Oowikapun: or, How the Gospel Came to Nelson River. Thereafter, for the next fifteen years, the names of John McDougall and E. R. Young dominate the book-length publications of Canadian Methodist writers dealing with western subjects, John Maclean in the meantime providing the bulk of the remaining titles. Bruce Peel's listing under Methodism provides eighteen items published between 1882 and 1911, and of these eighteen, four are by Maclean, four by Young, and six by McDougall, leaving only four to other Methodist authors in the west, over a thirty year period. Even at that, the listings for these authors must be supplemented by reference to other subject-categories in Peel's bibliography: juvenile fiction, travel, and Indians. Altogether, Peel ascribes seven books to Young between 1890 and 1907, a total which leaves entirely out of account two further volumes by Young, published in 1896 and 1899 respectively, entitled Three Boys in the Wild North Land and Winter Adventures of Three Boys in the Great Lone Land. These were the volumes which Elizabeth Waterston chose to associate with Ryerson's name when she wrote, in the chapter on travel-writing in the revised edition of The Literary History of Canada: "Egerton Ryerson Young's books for boys, such as Winter Adventures of Three Boys (1899), not strictly travel books, fixed the image of the 'great lone land' in the minds of British schoolboys.'"

I have no knowledge of any public comment by John McDougall, after the appearance of the pamphlet of 1895, on Young's evident decision to persist (as McDougall would have seen it) in the error of his ways. It seems probable, however, that McDougall was among those that J. H. Riddell had in mind when he wrote, in Methodism in the Middle West (1946), apropos Young's later career as a lecturer and writer: "Those who profess to know Indian life intimately, contend that some of his stories are highly idealized accounts of some very ordinary incidents in the life of the noble Red Man."[5] Yet we must assume that during the busy years of his own later career, John McDougall was revolving in his mind the problems connected with achieving an acceptable mode of fictional representation of life among the Indians, a project which he could undertake without loss of his cherished consistency once he was no longer formally associated with the church. In 1906 he retired from the ministry, returning to his home at Morley where he had written the biography of his father nearly twenty years before. Two years later, in 1908, appeared the work of fiction which has been named above in the early pages of this chapter: "Wa-pee Moos-tooch," or, "White Buffalo": The Hero of a Hundred Battles. A Tale of Life in Canada's Great West During the Early Years of the Last Century.

One approaches critical analysis of this book with more than a little diffidence, for it occupies an anomalous position in the literary history of western Canada, a one-of-a-kind production which followed no obvious models, and inspired no known imitations. The critic operates here with little of the comforting assurance that there are traditions in which it can safely be placed, conventions to which it can be seen to conform; while, as with the memoirs, the evidences of technical naiveté are likely to deflect the interest of critics for whom the phrase "the rhetoric of fiction" calls to mind the labyrinthine procedures of novelists like George Meredith or Henry James. Wa-pee Moos-Tooch stands entirely to one side of the main lines of prose fiction in English up to, and well beyond, its time.

To enumerate what the book is not, however, contributes little to an understanding of what it is. Paradoxically, perhaps, it is not the trained student of English literature who is in the best position to pass judgment on McDougall's intentions and achievements in this work of fiction, unless, once again, aided by the expert knowledge of the student of Cree language and culture. Having, to this time, been unable to obtain that kind of assistance, my assessment here must remain tentative: but I am prepared to venture as a safe general proposition, that McDougall was attempting -- and to a remarkable extent succeeded in his attempt -- to assimilate the essential features of early and middle nineteenth-century Cree culture to the broad aims of the historical novel in English. In brief, what

McDougall was trying to do for the western society he had come to know during the 1860's was what Scott had done for Scotland in his fiction.

Wa-pee Moos-tooch is the story of the training of a young chief, in order that he may become a leader of his people. It was basically the same story that McDougall had told in his memoirs, where he cast the narrative in terms appropriate to the leader he there sought to commemorate and define -- the new Northwest man, pioneer to the core. White Buffalo, on the other hand (McDougall uses the English translation of his title phrase throughout his novel), is also a leader, but the education he receives, and the terms in which it is described, are sanctioned by generations of ritual and tradition, evolved within a specific natural environment. The book opens, not with the introduction of the title character, but with a description of the home territory of the wood-and-plain Cree -- topography, flora, fauna and climate -- and of the main occupations of the people. The Cree of his tale, as the author makes a point of remarking, have a dual culture, mingling the pursuits of the people of the woods, and those of the people of the plains. Only when these essential factors in the picture have been placed before the reader does he proceed to White Buffalo's story.

This story begins in Chapter II, describing the early training of the future chief at the hands of the tribe's elders, and continuing (in Chapter III) to an account of his first testing in war. Thereafter the action of the story proceeds along dual lines, chapters on the further testing of the young hero interspersed with those on the domestic side of Cree camp life, centering around White Buffalo's courtship and marriage of Nagos, a maiden of the north. The story ends with the accession of White Buffalo to the position for which his education has fitted him, as chief of his people; and his feeling of accomplishment is complete because he has Nagos at his side.

Unsurprisingly, and as was also the case with Butler's books, there are certain parallels to be drawn between the work of fiction and the earlier books of non-fiction prose. In Wa-pee Moos-tooch, as in the memoirs, we are shown the rise of a young man to a position of influence and respect, under the guidance of certain teachers. We are shown, too, the central character's travels to a distant country in search of a mate; his increasing awareness of the differences in customs and beliefs which can grow up in different environments; and his satisfaction at knowing of his bride's courageous acceptance of an unaccustomed way of life far from her parents and homeland. What is particularly intriguing to the reader well acquainted with the memoirs, however, is not how much of himself John McDougall put into this tale, but how much he left out: principally, that large and conspicuous part of his life that was taken up with the work for God and country. In writing this work of fiction, McDougall showed his readiness to abide by the Indian's principle of respect for the beliefs and traditions of other peoples. The result must have puzzled the majority of his Methodist readers, who probably expected to be told how the Gospel came to the Saskatchewan River. But McDougall maintains perfect historical consistency: although there are white men in the region in the early years of the last century, these being a very few fur-traders, there are no missionaries, and no apparent need for them.

The depth of McDougall's imaginative engagement with this work of fiction can be gauged in the first instance from the language of the book throughout. The prose style of Wa-pee Moos-tooch strikes the most distinctive note in the whole work. Once again, it is to the Bloomfield edition of Plains Cree Texts that we must look to find analogies to the rhythms and syntax of McDougall's prose style here; for the influence of Cree on English, faint but discernible in the memoirs, is strongly marked in the work of fiction. Although Wa-pee Moos-tooch is written in English, it is the English of one who was, during the time of writing, mentally and emotionally attuned to the idioms of thought and language of the inland Cree. Extending beyond an intensification of traits already noted in connection with the memoirs -- certain formulaic words and phrases, frequent recourse to gerundive constructions -- it takes the form of a thorough-going integration of content, style and form.

Since few readers of McDougall's tale are likely to bring to the book much personal knowledge of its cultural framework, it may be useful to provide at this point two specimens of narrative prose, for the purpose of suggesting to the reader how thoroughly the Cree language and culture permeate Wa-pee Moos-tooch. The passage which follows immediately here is from Leonard Bloomfield's Plains Cree Texts (page 81), describing the killing of an enemy scout:

> As he was on the way, climbing a smaller hill, there rose beyond it another very high one, and there he saw, from the place he had reached, a man climbing up, a man wearing a blanket robe and holding a gun, who stood still every little ways to reconnoitre. . . . At last he had watched him a long time. Presently he saw him lower his head and no longer look about. "Doubtless he is sleeping," he thought, and started to walk in that direction. He kept walking along where the other had climbed the hilltop. "Probably he is a Blackfoot, and yet for all I know, he may be an Assiniboine," he thought. When he came to where the other had squatted down, he could see him lying with lowered head. He could not tell who he was. He could not see his face. . . . At last he got near to him. When he looked at him, he saw that he was sound asleep and snoring. At last he came right up to him. When he looked at him, there lay a gun and a spy-glass. And he saw that he had extra moccasins tied in his belt. When he looked at him, as he slept there with his hands like this, "He is resting his head on his hand," he thought, and then he saw that he had some fingers cut off. He concluded, "And so he is a Blackfoot."
>
> He looked about him and saw a stone. He walked back and took the stone. Then he went there where the other had stood, and took a good footing close to him, and hit him on the head with the stone, and killed him.

To this brief narrative, given in translation from the Sweet Grass Cree, compare the following episode, from pages 59-61 of Wa-pee Moos-tooch:

> Suddenly White Buffalo, with his keen eye, saw away in the distance on the summit of a hill which covered the country to the rear of the camp the trail of which they were following, what he seemed instinctively to know was the outstretched body of a man. . . . And he, remembering the lone woman's wail, and the fearful sight of yonder camp, to which himself and party had come, had but one desire.
>
> "Let me but near to yonder man, and if he is awake it will be which is the quicker, which is the stronger, and if he is asleep then perhaps he will awake no more."
>
> Thus White Buffalo communed with himself, and all the while studied the country between him and the outstretched man, its undulations, its small ravines, its general topography, even the dust pan hollows and buffalo trails, the work of countless herds throughout the ages, were keenly and closely taken stock of by this young hunter-warrior, who started in this life with the generations of such work behind him, and whose life thus far in the making of the scout had been full of magnificent opportunity, watching everything possible to

> human vision, forever watching the outstretched form that seemed as part of the hilltop. This speck upon the summit, but which White Buffalo, as if by instinct, knew was not the hill, but a man on the hill. Slowly, carefully, persistently he crept nearer. By and by he said to himself:
>
> "That poor fellow is asleep. How foolish for any man when on duty to go to sleep!" This thought seemed to comfort him. This man deserved to die. He had abused his trust. "Even his own people should demand his death. How much more I who am here to avenge the death of so many of my people."
>
> Thus White Buffalo, who had somewhat hesitated, began to encourage himself in the work of death he was about to perform. Closer he crawled, and looked and watched and listened, and now he saw the movement of the man's body as he breathed. A little closer and he heard his breathing. With bow strung and arrow in his left hand, and with his scalping knife in his right, silently he approached his victim. The man was stretched with his face down on the ground. He also had his bow and arrow in his hand, and his knife lay there beside him. All this White Buffalo took in at a glance, barely breathing, and now full of strong desire to overcome, to kill, thirsting for this, his first opportunity at the foe of his people. He raised his arm, and sent the knife right through the sleeping man's heart. The Blackfoot hardly stirred, he merely looked and saw his enemy and died.

The similarities evident in these two passages -- similarities of theme, of narrative mode and of the use of language -- are symptomatic of a wide range of parallels which could be drawn between McDougall's tale of 1908, and the ethnologist's collection of oral narratives gathered from the Sweet Grass Cree in 1925. The major difference between them lies in the scale and structuring of the materials which were common to both. Plains Cree Texts is an assortment of anecdotes, and little more. Although Bloomfield organized the texts into four broad categories -- Life and Worship, The Past, The Powers Around Us, Sacred Stories -- there is little continuity between the sections, or between individual contributions to each section. The texts appear instead as fragments of an oral culture, accessible to the trained student of aboriginal cultures chiefly through the convenient circumstance of there having been devised, originally for other purposes, a means of literal transcription of their speech. "The Great Spirit did not tell the White Man how he placed and instructed the Cree upon this earth," runs one of the stories of Life and Worship. "That is why they do not know it. But this was why he sent down the Cree writing, the Cree Syllabary, that through it it might be believed."[6]

In *Wa-pee Moos-tooch*, the fragments are gathered up, amplified, and set within a coherent framework of narrative design, as White Buffalo is led by his creator through the principal rites of his people. Chapter titles such as "His First Buffalo Hunt," "He Joins His First War Party," "Single-handed He Brings in Several Horses," and "He Leads His Followers on a Far Campaign," suggest the variety and range of these traditional practices. Other episodes take White Buffalo outside the usual experiences of his people, however. "A Lone Northern Expedition" opens White Buffalo's eyes to the fact of cultural variation, a theme which is further pursued through the characters of *Nagos*, *Niska*, Snake Skin and Little Star.

Although the major part of the tale deals with the successive stages in the training of White Buffalo, there are occasional breaks in the narrative while McDougall pauses to describe the camp-life of the people as a whole. One of these occurs in the chapter entitled "The Great Religious Festival." From this chapter, I offer these few excerpts, in order to show how closely observed were the customs being recorded here:

After a few days the camp moved by common consent into a selected spot, and everyone prepared for the great thirst dance, the religious festival of the year. Many were under vow, and this annual festival gave them the opportunity for the fulfilment of their vow. This religious gathering had been for ages the custom of the people.

. . . .

The conjurors prepared their medicines, and night and morning before the camp moved the drums beat furiously, dancing lodges were erected at every encampment, and the four orders of dancers took their turns, the "wood partridges," the "prairie chickens," the "medicine rattlers," and the "kid foxes," each in turn to vocal and drum accompaniment went through their evolutions of movement.

. . . .

Now comes the crucial time for this chief medicine man. If these warriors accept the pipe from him, then the success of his venture is assured, but if they do not take the pipe as he offers it to them, the whole scheme is a failure, and a new chief priest, and a new location, will have to be sought. No wonder it is a tense moment for the would-be high priest of this great gathering.

The two companies draw near to each other, and while the priests are chanting in doleful notes petitionary and sacrificial hymns, and the warriors are lustily singing songs of victory, the whole camp is hushed in silent expectation as to the outcome. The warriors know the issue lies with them, and carry themselves accordingly. In all the pride and pomp of martial dignity and costume, they sit their picked steeds and await the priest's action. This personage is now almost unnerved. The long vigils and fastings and hardships have emaciated his body, and this is weak. But his communings with the spirit world have made him feel that he has a mission, and he is essential to the well-being of his people. He has grown within the last few days to believe he is an apostle and a bringer of good, and in his mind he feels these warriors must in their own interests accept him. Nevertheless, there is the possibility of their not doing so. No messenger has reached him from the secret conclave held yonder behind the hills. Soon he will know, and now he pulls himself together, and at first with quavering voice and trembling limb he holds the sacred pipe aloft and prays. Immediately in front of him is the chosen chief of the warriors, who gives no indication of what he is going to do in this matter. In silence he and the entire assemblage listen as the aspirant for priestly honors seems to forget himself in the intenseness of his purpose. His voice gathers strength, his limbs cease to tremble, and with native and pure eloquence he calls upon the deity to bless this gathering, to pity his children, to accept their sacrifices, to smile upon their effort.

. . . .

> And as the sun draws near to the earth on the evening of the third day, the annual festival is finished. From thenceforth for the rest of the season the bare poles of the big lodge and from the top of which there will be fluttering in the breeze the various sacrifices made by the people, will remain as marking the spot where the annual festival was kept.
>
> Our warriors took part with their people in this religious gathering, and to one constituted as White Buffalo was, all this was done with great reverence. In his way, he was profoundly religious. While he took no part in the torture dance, yet he believed with his people that this also was proper (WM, 288-296).

Here we have evidence of how fully McDougall adhered to his stated purpose in this tale, which was to try "faithfully to depict [White Buffalo's] manner of life at the time," McDougall here foreseeing, as in the memoirs, the possibility that "we may again come before you with the further life and experience" of the central character in his chronicle (WM, 335-6).

Like the memoirs, then, John McDougall's fiction offers little incentive to pursue literary analysis in any of its more conventional forms. Whatever associations Wa-pee Moos-tooch may hold with the broader field of English-language literary culture are tenuous at best. Certainly the book bears little visible resemblance to the main trends of English fiction in the early twentieth century, aside from the "tales of humble life" that persisted in the literary sub-culture of England, America and Canada among Methodist and other evangelical Christian readers from the 1830's onwards. If other associations are to be made, they must go well back, and well forward, in time; back, to the chronicles of John Galt, which helped to pave the way for the historical fiction of Walter Scott as he sought to add a literary dimension to the folk-ways of the people of Scotland;

forward, to the fictional documentaries of Rudy Wiebe.

In The Temptations of Big Bear, published nearly seventy years after John McDougall's single work of fiction, the same impulse to shed light on the present by exploring the past once more brings the roots of prairie society into the living tradition of western cultural development. "Sweetgrass had signed the treaty," Wiebe begins, "unearthing," in his own word, the history that imagination invents.

> In late February when we again had to ride for buffalo, Shaw rode beside me and said:
>
> "John, your father's gone. You surely won't remain in the missionary work any longer. This land's all empty, look at it. I see nothing but progress here from now on, so let's work together in the stock business, you on this side of the mountains and I on the other. I'll give you half my stock, right now, so we can start on an equal basis. What do you say?"
>
> We were at the base of a long hill, on the top of which stood a great rock like a sentinel. I galloped up the hill and, with some difficulty, climbed the rock. There, stretched at full length, lay the body of a man wrapped in buffalo leather. The space was so narrow I could only stand with one foot on either side of the dead warrior and out over the land, black on the fierce white snow, I could see a few, solitary, buffalo.
>
> Sweetgrass. Shaw. Big Bear. How could anyone not a fool expect me to say anything else? The answers were different, but truly, they were exactly the same. Who can not know there was only one word I could say? That I had to feel a deep satisfaction when I had spoken it?[7]

John McDougall said "no" to the stock-man Shaw, as he had said "no" to Chief Factor William Christie at a former moment of crisis in his life. His choice was to stay with the "real work" of Indian missions in the west; while William Francis Butler, in the meantime, went on with his games for Queen Victoria.

XIII

IMAGES OF THE CANADIAN WEST

Were the writing of literary history a more straightforward and clear-cut affair than it is, there would be no need for the multitude of essays which exist devoted to the definition and defense of this particular branch of scholarship. Whether applying the methods of history to the content of literature, in the sense in which scholars like Robert Spiller in the United States, and Desmond Pacey and Carl Klinck in this country, have understood the phrase "literary history"; or, conversely, interpreting the subject-matter of history through the techniques and assumptions of the literary craftsman, as historians like Francis Parkman, Arthur Lower and Donald Creighton are widely recognized to have done: in either of these cases, the literary historian must contend with the internal dissensions within both academic fields, while refusing to countenance the suggestion that the two parties to the union -- literature and history -- hover perpetually on the threshhold of divorce. The task is difficult enough where cultural traditions are long-standing and distinct; but in dealing with a culture where the main themes of history and literature alike are only now beginning to emerge from the flux of rapid development and change, identifying these themes, and explaining their inter-dependence, inevitably invites almost immediate challenge and revision.

This study has presented for discussion a limited number of particular events in western Canada's literary history, books which require analysis from a dual perspective, as documents and as artifacts. They were chosen because on the one hand, they permit specific demonstration of how the critical and historical principles of literary history, to adapt a phrase from R. S. Crane, can be applied in practice to a given prose genre, the narrative of travel and adventure, as it moves from non-fiction to fiction form within the context of given time and place; and because on the other hand, they provide an opportunity to convey some sense of how the minds and feelings of historic individuals contribute to the gradual accretion of a literary tradition. This latter aspect of my subject I have cast within the framework of a narrative of challenge and response, on the understanding that individual responses to a common challenge can take place on an almost infinitely-gradated scale, ranging from the implied compliment of quotation and imitation, to outright repudiation -- the Lie Direct, however indirect its means of statement.

Analysis of the narrative of travel and adventure, then, is useful to the study of the literary history of western Canada on two grounds. In the first instance, it places before the reader a body of material of value both to the student of social formation, and to the student of literary beginnings. Even more important in the long run, however, is the obligation which it places on the literary historian to answer the two questions which I have earlier specified:

"Whose literature?" and "In what way literary?" Not only does the provision of answers to these questions confirm beyond all possible doubt the value -- the necessity, even -- of cross-disciplinary communication and understanding, to the writing of literary history, but it also leads outwards to critical assessment of methodology: the principles of historiography, and the principles of literary criticism.

It is for this reason, therefore, that although large parts of the preceding chapters have been devoted to definition of certain key terms in the vocabulary of the cultural historian -- words such as "civilization," "society," "pioneer," "gentleman," "frontier," and the word "culture" itself -- it should be understood that my object has not been to define what these words mean under any and all circumstances, but to show how they acquire certain connotations in the hands of writers who have reason to be more-than-ordinarily conscious of their relation to the society to which they address their books. In the early chapters of the study, the discussion centred upon the publications of William Francis Butler as being a satisfying example of a sensibility which, while militantly individualistic in temperament, was nonetheless sufficiently attuned to the customs and expectations of his time and place to perform as a spokesman for the cultural ambience we call mid-Victorian Britain. I began by suggesting how Butler's own social history reached out to shape his varying accounts, in official report, travel narrative, autobiography, and fictional romance, of the social history in western Canada to which he was first-hand witness. Placed against the accumulated evidence of such perceptive students of Butler's times as George Meredith and G. Kitson Clark, there seems to me little doubt that Butler's irregular position within the political, social and economic entity he called Home accounts at least in part for the insistence with which he pursued the ideals, attitudes and literary mannerisms of the gentleman traveller abroad, particularly throughout the pages of The Great Lone Land.

At the same time, it has also seemed desirable to go beyond this essentially biographical form of literary analysis, and attempt to evaluate the congruence of Butler's literary practice with the materials which provide his subject matter. In its briefest terms, the argument has been that personal frustration and disappointment induced Butler to make certain literary choices: the choice of a conventional form, the narrative of travel and adventure "amongst remote Indian tribes"; of an identifiable mode, the elegaic; and of a much-practised tone, the ironic; but that these choices, however appropriate to his own feelings and expectations at the time of composition, were singularly inappropriate to the feelings and expectations of Canadians whose vital interests were caught up in the public life of their country. Similarly, his choices of modes and themes of fiction, while also conforming to established literary conventions in Victorian England, bore little relation to life in the Northwest as residents of that region knew it.

It is difficult, however, without a conscious and comprehensive effort of both the literary and the historical imagination, to understand the magnitude and complexity of the task which confronted those Canadians who, from whatever motives, felt the obligation to try to meet Butler on his own grounds. For The Great Lone Land does, after all, draw its greatest strengths as a literary achievement from its thorough mastery of a sophisticated and supremely self-conscious literary culture. In the development of the narrative persona, in the concern for structural balance, in the demonstrable thematic integrity, and especially in Butler's command over, and delight in, the characteristic rhetoric of the Romantic and post-Romantic writers of Britain and America, The Great Lone Land continues to impress by its high degree of literary competence. Add to this catalogue of technical accomplishments, however, the matter of Butler's tone in his travel accounts -- assured, ironic, thoroughly at Home with the values and habits of mind of the culture he speaks for -- and the prospects of carrying on a quarrel in print with Captain Butler in anything other than the tones of the Reply Churlish devolve into a literary challenge of no small stature.

A man of George Monro Grant's background and education could take this kind of challenge in stride. Recognizing the temptations waylaying educated travellers in the Northwest to "make a book" of their experiences, Grant was little inclined to dispute the legitimacy of such ambitions, except in the politest of terms. For despite the many points of difference between Butler and Grant, as individuals and as spokesmen for their respective communities, still they were both literate, cultivated men, whose sense of proportion stemmed from the secure knowledge that empire radiated outwards from the established centres of population and culture at Home -- in Britain, and, at one remove, in the cities of eastern Canada. Both men deprecated the evidences of narrow-mindedness which they saw burgeoning in the Northwest in the early 1870's: Butler, the "petty provincial quarrel" that was the Métis resistance in Fort Garry; Grant, the "petty provincialism" which "Western men have been accused of displaying" (OTO, 87). Yet neither man was blind to the great potential for future national development offered by the unsettled territories of the Northwest: "this great link in the chain of a future nationality," in Butler's phrase, from the report of 1871; the "rising of that national sentiment" which George Grant thought would make "this Western country . . . the very backbone of the Dominion" (OTO, 87). In short, their points of convergence were of a nature that could end in a gentlemen's agreement, as it were, to publish their variant accounts of travel in the region without laying undue emphasis on their points of difference.

The case of the two McDougalls, however, father and son, was clearly otherwise. As far as George McDougall is concerned, we know that the complexity of the challenge offered by Butler's book lay entirely beyond his capability to respond in kind; for when he wrote that "one hardly knows how to apologise for the mis-statements of intelligent tourists" in the west, he was simply declaring his alienation from the literary culture which men like Southesk and Cheadle took as the norm. George McDougall's situation was not, after all, so very much different from H. B. Steinhauer's, whose achievement it was (according to John McDougall) to leap in one generation across the chasm which separated the brush camp from the Christian gentleman, the savage from the practical civilizer. Yet since the civilization that George McDougall propagated was predominantly practical, his direct legacy to Canadian culture can be discerned only in the institutional life of western Canada. Bred to "the exigencies of real pioneer life on the frontier," the elder McDougall may well, as his son contended, have held the respect of the overwhelming majority of the Northwest's residents at the time; yet it is also clear that outside the range of the work for God and country, and especially in his contacts with emissaries from Home, he was apt to be sadly handicapped all through. There can be little doubt that Lord Southesk would have found George McDougall "vulgar" and "underbred"; there can be no doubt whatsoever that Butler found him "a poor semblance of a man."

These judgements, in so many words, entered the published record in accounts by British travellers of their experiences in the Northwest of Canada. The task which John McDougall set himself was to correct the mis-statements of these intelligent tourists: in short, to set the record straight. This he did by the time-honoured method of going back to basics, re-defining in his memoirs the central terms in the discussion, from the point of view of one whose sense of Home was rooted in the Northwest commonwealth. The first step in this procedure, however, and a critical one, was to re-locate the centre of Empire, first to the "little nucleus of Christian civilization" which became Victoria Mission in the summer of 1863, and then, with George McDougall's next westward removal in 1872, to Edmonton, which, as John described it, "stands for the centredom of the great Saskatchewan country -- the centre in religion, government, commerce, transport"; and the centre, too, "in those things which appeal to the mental and spiritual." Hence the insistent and detailed exposition in his memoirs of how "a commencement . . . . of civilization in these vast regions" (these words come from Butler's report) had really taken place ten years and more before the visit of Captain Butler.

Having so far identified the importance of the time and place in definitions of civilization and savagery, pioneers and gentlemen, and indeed in the many dimensions of culture as a shaping force in the lives of men and women, John McDougall's next step was to face up to the handicaps which he recognized in his father's relations with the society of cultivated men, and which he knew to reflect a serious limitation of mind and sensibility. Convinced, probably well into the 1880's, and possibly as late as 1894, that it was the task of the pioneer to live in deeds, not words, McDougall nonetheless undertook the formidable project -- formidable because of the peculiarities of his own background and education -- of beginning a new life in words. The disabilities which his writing laboured under are not likely to escape the notice of the informed and sensitive reader. What I believe needs clarifying, however, is the relative success with which he identified and met a wide range of fundamental problems confronting the writer who acts, in terms of literary culture, as a pioneer. To move from the perplexity of R. M. Ballantyne in 1848, struggling with appropriate similes to describe the coming of spring and the isolation of Red River, through the varied perceptions of literate Britons like Palliser, Butler, Southesk and Cheadle, to the relaxed and circumstantial verbal 'photographs' of George Monro Grant in Ocean to Ocean, is a long road to travel in less than a quarter-century of published description of an unknown region. To people this region, however -- to place men and women in an unforced relation to their environment, and to show them in their customary dress, occupations and speech, acting and inter-acting in accordance with clearly-defined beliefs and shared ranges of emotion -- all this is to lay essential groundwork for the fictional representation of a society. This I believe to have been John McDougall's major achievement as a writer. In his memoirs, the image of the Canadian west, for thirty years and more fixed in the public mind as The Great Lone Land, became a fully-realized scene, panoramic in scope and detailed in depiction, and with each factor in the picture -- topographic, botanic, zoologic, and human -- complete and natural and true.

Pace John McDougall, there are still pioneers, and Edward McCourt was one of them. In the essay alluded to in the introduction to this study, "Prairie Literature and Its Critics," McCourt wrote, modestly and almost apologetically, that "criticism and research pertaining to prairie literature is almost entirely a recent development, the first detailed treatment of a single genre appearing as late as 1949." It is left to the conscientious reader of footnotes to discover what this detailed treatment was, and who wrote it. McCourt's The Canadian West in Fiction, however much individual readers may find to criticize in his pioneer study, will probably be the starting point for a good many theses yet to come. One response to McCourt's literary history of the west, Laurence Ricou's Vertical Man/Horizontal World, was published in 1973; others are in press, or in preparation. Therefore, although McCourt's 1972 survey of criticism of prairie literature was limited almost entirely to articles in little magazines and literary periodicals, a similar essay written ten years later will have to take into account a much larger and (one feels sure) stronger field of historical and critical analysis.

This analysis will follow as many directions as there are capable and enquiring minds. What one of those directions is certain to be, however, was revealed to McCourt just before he came to the end of his own scholarly career, in an essay by Eli Mandel, "Images of Prairie Man." This essay was published at the conclusion of the same collection -- A Region of the Mind -- in which McCourt's article appeared; and by a fortunate arrangement on the part of the volume's editor, Richard Allen, McCourt was given an opportunity to read and comment on Mandel's remarks. Wrote McCourt:

> One point of peculiar interest, not yet fully examined although hinted at by Mandel, concerns the extent to which our attitude to our environment, and hence the nature of our literature, has been affected by a concept of the frontier imposed from without. How many of our early settlers and writers, and particularly those of Old Country middle class background,

> persistently saw their prairie environment not in terms of prosaic physical reality, but as it had first been revealed to them in the pages of Butler and Ballantine [sic] and a score more travellers, explorers, novelists, poets who had written romantically of the Great Lone Land?

Then, after canvassing several implications of "this possibility -- indeed near certainty," McCourt concludes:

> The first step which must be taken towards answering the questions which must be asked before intelligent appraisal and criticism of prairie literature are possible is a detailed examination of the innumerable documents (diaries, journals, letters, community histories, newspaper files) now gathering dust in our libraries. Occasionally they are disturbed by the historian or sociologist or economist; but hardly ever by a student of our creative literature. The individual value of each document may be almost negligible, but the cumulative evidence of a substantial body of these early compositions may help us to a clearer conception of the prairie mentality, of the forces which have helped to shape it, and of the possible effect of that mentality on the re-shaping of its own environment.
>
> Only through such explorations of root sources can we hope to come to something approaching a sympathetic understanding of our literature and ourselves.[1]

Like Edward McCourt, I find Mandel's article on images of prairie man to be "one of the most original and stimulating in its field"; I agree, too, that it "deserves the widest possible circulation and critical discussion."[2] For Mandel is the kind of scholar, rare enough in any country, who is capable of doing for literary and cultural criticism what the best historiographers professionally accomplish for their colleagues, which is the development of tools of reflexive analysis. If, as Carl Berger defines his work in The Writing of Canadian History, "the history of history, or historiography, is the historical method turned in upon itself," then the equivalent process in the field of literature is to turn the literary-critical method in upon itself: the object being, in both disciplines, to offset as far as possible the distortions of bias, of passion, and of autobiography.

Particularly is this process needful when the question, "Whose literature?" is added to the question, "In what way literary?" It was in an earlier essay (the preface to Contexts of Canadian Criticism) that Mandel wrote: "As soon as we add the word Canadian to criticism, we move the object of our concern into a particular space and time, a geographical and historical context, where what might normally remain simply an element of the background -- the sociology of literature -- becomes the foreground."[3] No less applicable to the reflexive analysis of Canadian literary history and criticism, than to the writing of Canadian history, then, is Carl Berger's observation, following Herbert Butterfield, that "there are hidden and unsuspected factors behind any national tradition of historical writing, and these need to be raised as far as possible to the level of consciousness so that they can be neutralized and brought under control."[4]

In "Images of Prairie Man," Mandel explains why he prefers one extreme limit in the discussion, that of the mythic, which "sees environment as a creation of literature," to the other extreme, that of the sociological, which "sees literature and art as reflections of (or interactions with) environment." Mandel writes:

> An infinite variety of unique responses can never add up to the commonality implied by "prairie man." Indeed, the kind of articulation, patterning, and signification we mean by the term "image" suggests that we are looking for impressions and responses that have been raised into the order of thought. If we mean seriously to talk about images of prairie man, we

> are in fact concerned with prairie art and prairie literature, and we believe that somehow, as art and literature, they can be distinguished from other forms of art and literature.[5]

It is that "somehow" that Mandel turns his attention to in the remainder of his article, outlining the choice that he thinks must be made between the determinism implicit in the environmental approach of critics like Henry Kreisel, Warren Tallman, and McCourt himself, and what he sees as the greater interpretive flexibility of mythic criticism. "McCourt insists," Mandel writes, "on the presence of a limited and peculiar environment accurately described. But what can 'accuracy' possibly mean here? . . . The temptation is to believe that 'accurate description' really means the imitation of certain easy clichés and stereotypes about landscape and environment." Mandel's own approach, on the other hand, is to adopt a level of analysis which is the product of interdisciplinary study, and which "suggests that 'prairie' means something different: a sort of complex conceptual framework within which various social inter-relationships can be viewed and understood."[6]

If a recent essay by Manitoba historian J. E. Rae is a trustworthy sign, some of the same appreciation for impressions and responses raised to the order of thought is beginning to infiltrate the opposite camp, the sociological one. Rae's brief essay, which is historiographical in purpose, is entitled "Images of the West"; it was published in 1974 in Western Perspectives I, the continuation of the Prairie Perspectives series.[7] According to Rae, the west has not even yet, in the 1970's, emerged from becoming into being. "The West," Rae writes, "still manifests the insecurity of youth; the lack of any settled and comfortable self-definition." What Rae discerns, instead of a corporate entity, is an image, or at best a limited group of images, traditionally associated by outsiders with the prairie provinces, but not necessarily true to the inwardness of western life. "To most Canadians, including historians," he maintains, "the west conjures up certain images, provoked by key words such as agrarianism, Progressives, or third party dissent." These images, of course, are not the products of spontaneous generation; they have specific sources. "There is a whole body of [scholarly] literature to sustain this image," Rae writes, adding, "Behind historical scholarship lie the travel tales and the fiction, the books of William Butler, Frederick Philip Grove, Ralph Connor and Robert Stead."

Rae's plea in this article is for the writing of western history to embark on new directions, in order to take account of issues generated by urbanization, labour, class and ethnic conflict. Criticizing Morton's history of Manitoba for being "one-dimensional," because it concentrates on the agrarian past, Rae confesses that "at bottom, I suppose, I am reacting against a stereotype, albeit one drawn with deep sensitivity." What he wants instead from the new generation of prairie scholars is particularized research into the documents, aimed towards the construction of "a much more varied and multi-faceted image of western society, demonstrating its unique, regional characteristics." And once again, he suggests that the way has been pointed by the writers of fiction, naming three novelists -- Adele Wiseman, John Marlyn and Rudy Wiebe -- who, by articulating their differences from the "dominant . . . British rural values," stand as "spokesmen" for their respective communities.

With the particular content of the images Rae here raises for discussion I am not at present concerned. What I do think invites comment is the sequential process of articulation and self-definition he describes in this article, with its progression from the simple to the complex, the one-dimensional and stereotyped to the varied and multi-faceted. It is, for one thing, a process which the reader of the present study may have also observed as having taken place in the image of the Canadian west articulated and defined in the late nineteenth century narratives of travel and adventure: a process applied predominantly to a regional landscape, but also, in embryonic form, to a regional society as well. Such images, as McCourt, Mandel and Rae all observe from their different vantage points, all find their source and shape in the dream in the mind. The critical issue therefore becomes, as I see it, not how to choose between the dream and the reality, the myth and the fact; but how to find ways of appraising the relation of the one to the other.

In Virgin Land, his classic study of the American west as symbol and myth, Henry Nash Smith quotes from Jason Edwards, An Average Man, by Hamlin Garland, a novel published in 1892. One of the characters in Garland's novel exclaims, "So this is the reality of the dream! This is the 'homestead in the Golden West, embowered in trees, beside the purling brook!' A shanty on a barren plain, hot and lone as a desert. My God!'" Smith explains these words by remarking that

Garland wanted to "point the moral of the tale. . . . In view of actual conditions in the West, the ideal of a yeoman society could be considered nothing but a device of propaganda manipulated by cynical speculators."[8] Smith may be right in finding Garland's literary use of this insight historically significant, in terms of the development of realism as a mode of fiction; but the insight itself was the property of writers long before 1892. Compare to Garland's novel, for example, the passage from *Ocean to Ocean* (on page 350 of the Coles reprint) in which George Grant, giving vent to a rare moment of bitterness, describes the "great reality" of the American desert, and remarks, "The enterprise that ran 'the pony express,' that constructed telegraphs and a line of Railway across such a country is wonderful; but not half so wonderful as the faith that sees in such a desert an earthly paradise, or the assurance that publishes its visions of what ought to be, for pictures of what is, or the courage that volunteers the sacrifice of any number of foreigners to prove the sincerity of its faith."

"The question we have come to, then," Mandel wrote, in his essay in *A Region of the Mind*, "is not *who* is prairie man, but *what images* does he choose?" And in particular, what images do writers of the Canadian prairies choose, that may distinguish this body of literature from that produced by writers whose environment is topographically and even economically similar, but whose political, social, and/or linguistic development has taken divergent routes? The question, so phrased, is deceptive, however; for simply to seize on recurring images in fiction or poetry, conceived of as discrete components of rhetorical construction, without enquiring into their relation to the "complex conceptual framework" that is the prairie as a region of the Canadian mind, is to risk falling into another range of easy clichés and stereotypes, only this time in the area of historical process. This I believe to be the fundamental weakness of Ricou's study of prairie fiction: what Ricou provides in Vertical Man/Horizontal World is literary history with the history left out. The result is a series of perceptive remarks on character and plot development, embedded in a matrix of simplistic and uninformed generalizations about individual books and writers.

At the risk, therefore, of appearing to offer just one more easy generalization, I would suggest that Mandel's excellent advice to prospective critics of prairie literature -- that images of prairie man be studied and related to the enduring themes of literary creativity -- be tempered with McCourt's directive that we acquire some familiarity with the documentary record, which "may help us to a clearer conception of the prairie mentality, of the forces which have helped to shape it, and of the possible effect of that mentality on the re-shaping of its own environment." I believe, that is, that the roots of prairie society, and the roots of prairie literature, are to be found in one and the same place: in the verbal constructs, of greater or lesser sophistication and insight, which individual residents of the west have made in their separate attempts to live in words as well as deeds. The documents, as McCourt warns, are innumerable, or almost so: Bruce Peel's Bibliography of the Prairie

Provinces, which takes the record only as far as 1953, has upwards of four thousand entries, and every researcher in the field keeps a private list of lacunae in Peel's listings. They are also, at one and the same time, immensely varied and yet immensely repetitive; so that research which does not overwhelm the student by sheer volume is almost certain to exhaust the patience. The chief reward of such scholarship, however, is the awareness which one derives of how rhetorical and ethical considerations have combined, in published representations of the Canadian west, to insist on the kind of "accuracy of fact and tone" which Mandel considers to be "essentially superficial, if not indeed a contradiction in terms."[9]

As Mandel himself remarked, the question of accuracy lies at the heart of the problem of literary realism; as historians like W. L. Morton are also aware, it lies at the heart of the use of fiction and other forms of literature as documents of social history. From my study of the varied publications associated with the formative generations of western Canadian society, I have become convinced that questions of accuracy of fact and tone spring directly from moral issues of the kind suggested by G. M. Grant in Ocean to Ocean. From the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the 1920's, significant numbers of the region's writers, at all levels of publication, showed themselves in their writing to have been preternaturally sensitive to accurate representation of the prairie west. Alerted to the issues involved by the combined experience of settlement on the frontiers of Ontario, and the observation of western American settlement policies, they wrote as if they knew that responsibility for large numbers of trusting and uninformed "foreigners" lay upon their shoulders, and upon their consciences. As agents of verbal communication, they deliberately sought the "picture" of the west that was essentially faithful to the time and place, leaving the visions of what ought to be to the speculators in real estate.

To say this is not to deny a still-culpable degree of "buncombe" in Canadian settlement propaganda: it is there, and it is considerable, and it, too, needs to be taken into account in considering the question of the region's public image abroad. This much conceded, it nonetheless remains true that the various images of the Canadian west which can be discerned in the immigration propaganda, in the reports by delegates of tenant farmers and city tradesmen, in the volumes of "letters home," in the accounts by settlers, sportsmen, journalists, missionaries, poets, assorted dignitaries, and the several other categories of travellers through the west -- that the representations of the west contained in all these publications, are as much sources for the study of western Canada's literary history, as they are for other branches of the historical profession; and this is so because, scattered at random and often surprising points throughout this body of material, lie flashes of seriousness and honesty and the free play of the mind: aspects of our collective past which, no less than the "near-mythology of 'living' history," must stand as the basis of viable national traditions.

NOTES

Chapter I

[1] Douglas Hill, The Opening of the Canadian West (Toronto: Longman of Canada, 1967), p. 276.

[2] Pierre Berton, The National Dream (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), pp. 39-41. All the quotations which follow here are from these pages.

[3] James Lumsden, Canada in Harvest Time (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), p. xi.

[4] Nellie McClung, Clearing in the West (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1935), p. 29.

[5] Edward West, Homesteading Two Prairie Seasons (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1918), p. 221.

[6] Edward McCourt, "Prairie Literature and its Critics," in Richard Allen, ed., A Region of the Mind (Regina: Canadian Plains Study Centre, 1973), pp. 153, 154.

[7] Ibid.

Chapter II

[1] J. E. Rae, "The Roots of Prairie Society," in D. P. Gagan, ed., Prairie Perspectives (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston of Canada, 1970), pp. 46-47.

[2] See W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), especially p. 223: "For another decade Manitoba was to be predominantly a new, western Ontario"; and p. 250: "The Ontario immigrants had made the old dual community over in the image of their natal province."

[3] Ibid., pp. 115, 116.

[4] *Ibid*.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 94.

[6] A view recently challenged by Frits Pannekoek: see, for example, "The Anglican Church and the Disintegration of Red River Society, 1818-1870," in Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, eds., *The West and the Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 72-90.

[7] Morton, *ibid*., pp. 91-92.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 92.

[9] *Ibid*., p. 91.

[10] Gertrude Balmer Watt, *Town and Trail* (Edmonton, the News Publishing Company, 1908), pp. 31-32.

[11] Mrs. George Cran, *A Woman in Canada* (London: W. J. Ham Smith, 1910), pp. 269-70.

[12] James Boswell, *Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 54.

[13] Henry Bamford Parkes, *The Divine Order* (New York: Knopf, 1969), pp. 4-5.

[14] *Ibid*., p. 4.

[15] Morton, *Manitoba*, p. 227.

[16] G. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (London: Methuen, 1962), pp. 252-253.

[17] *Ibid*., p. 254.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 262.

[19] *Ibid*., p. 6.

[20] George Meredith, *The Egoist* (New York: Riverside edition, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1958), p. 13.

[21] *Ibid*., p. 22.

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] Morton, *Manitoba*, pp. 226-227.

[24] John McDougall, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1903). Subsequent citations will be incorporated in the text, and identified by the abbreviation *RRR*.

Chapter III

[1] W. F. Butler, The Great Lone Land (1872; rpt. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1968), pp. 385-386. Subsequent citations will be incorporated in the text, and identified by the abbreviation GLL.

[2] The designation for the region for which John Warkentin has coined the useful term "the western interior of Canada" did not remain constant throughout the period under discussion; morevoer, even where the phrase "the Northwest Territories" is used, there are variant spellings to take into consideration. In the present study, the shortest, simplest form -- "the Northwest" -- will be used in the text. Variants will, of course, be transcribed as they appear in quoted material.

[3] Butler's report to Lieutenant-Governor Archibald, dated 10th March, 1871, was appended to the first edition of The Great Lone Land, and has also been included in the Hurtig edition. The words quoted may be found on page 385 of that edition. Subsequent citations of Butler's report will be incorporated in the text, and identified by the abbreviation GLL. The reader should keep in mind that pages 353-388 of that edition are taken up by the report, and do not form part of the narrative of travel.

[4] W. F. Butler, The Wild North Land (1873; rpt. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1968), pp. xii, xiv. Subsequent citations will be incorporated in the text, and identified by the abbreviation WNL.

[5] Edward McCourt, Remember Butler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 84.

[6] Ibid., p. 254.

[7] Ibid., p. 80.

[8] Ibid., p. 142.

[9] Ibid., p. 34: "In the course of an adventurous life Butler was to see much of the world, but no other part of it, not even his native Tipperary, was ever as close to his heart as the vast prairie and parklands region of the North American west -- the great lone land of his most popular book."

[10] See also McCourt, Remember Butler, p. 56: "The truth is that the west was in his blood and he did not want to leave it."

[11] W. F. Butler, Sir William Butler. An Autobiography (London: Constable, 1911), p. 89.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., p. 92.

[14] Ibid., pp. 96-97.

[15] On Fetterman, Dodge, and Red Cloud, the gregarious Sioux, see James C. Olsen, Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), especially pp. 50-51, 60-61, 64-65.

[16] Butler, Autobiography, p. 97.

[17] McCourt, Remember Butler, p. 213.

[18] Morton, Manitoba, p. 156.

[19] John McDougall, George Millward McDougall: Pioneer, Patriot and Missionary (Toronto: William Briggs, 1888), p. 133. Subsequent citations will be incorporated in the text, and will be identified by the abbreviation GMM.

[20] Butler, Autobiography, p. 107.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 106 ff.

[23] Garnet Wolseley, "Narrative of the Red River Expedition," in Travel, Adventure and Sport from Blackwood's Magazine, vol. 1 (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood & Sons, n.d.), p. 291.

[24] Butler, Autobiography, p. 122.

[25] Ibid. Butler's treatment of this disappointment was somewhat oblique in his autobiographical account, but his meaning is quite clear: "At that time I took the world very much without questioning its men or motives. Each of these excellent colonial ministers had wives, sons, and daughters. An army officer who married a minister's daughter might perchance have been a fit and proper person to introduce the benefits of civilization to the Blackfeet Indians on the Western prairies, but if he elected to remain in single cussedness in Canada he was pretty certain to find himself a black sheep among the ministerial flock of aspirants for place, no matter what might have been the value of his individual services" (Autobiography, p. 123).

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., pp. 134-135.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p. xi.

Chapter IV

[1] Wolseley, *ibid.*, p. 196. With a forbearance which must have cost him some effort, Wolseley declares in the same article (p. 215) his intention to refrain from any "attempt to enter upon Canadian politics -- that most uninteresting and least edifying of topics."

[2] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p. 67.

[3] George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1975), p. 86. Woodcock quotes a description of a Métis village from *The Wild North Land* and remarks, "Butler described the Métis with that degree of colourful exaggeration which the Victorians expected of their travel writers, and he obviously viewed them with a crashing condescension."

Chapter V

[1] The writer of these words was Sebastian Meynell, in a "Biographical Sketch of the Author" appended to W. F. Butler, *Red Cloud: A Tale of the Great Prairie* (Toronto: Musson, n.d. [1911]), p. 332. Subsequent citations will be incorporated in the text, and identified by the abbreviation *RC*.

[2] R. M. Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay* (1848; rpt. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1972), pp. 1-2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 237.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[8] Butler, *Autobiography*, p. 89.

[9] Raymond Williams, The Country and the City (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 78. Describing Goldsmith's The Deserted Village, Williams writes:

> The exposure and suffering of the writer, in his own social situation, are identified with the facts of a social history that is beyond him. It is not that he cannot then see the real social history; he is often especially sensitive to it, as a present fact. But the identification between his own suffering and that of a social group beyond him is inevitably negative, in the end. The present is accurately and powerfully seen, but its real relations, to past and future, are inaccessible, because the governing development is that of the writer himself: a feeling about the past, an idea about the future, into which, by what is truly an intersection, an observed present is arranged. We need not doubt the warmth of Goldsmith's feelings about the men driven from their village: that connection is definite. The structure becomes ambiguous only when this shared feeling is extended to memory and imagination, for what takes over then, in language and idea, is a different pressure: the social history of the writer. . . . This creation of a 'desert' landscape is an imaginative rather than a social process; it is what the new order does to the poet, not to the land. . . . Here, with unusual precision, what we can later call a Romantic structure of feeling -- the assertion of nature against industry and of poetry against trade; the isolation of humanity and community into the idea of culture, against the real social pressures of the time -- is projected.

In place of "Goldsmith's feelings about the men driven from their village," substitute "Butler's feelings about the Indians driven from their land," and the process Williams describes can be applied directly to The Great Lone Land.

[10] John Warkentin, "Steppe, Desert and Empire," in A. W. Rasporich and H. C. Klassen, eds., Prairie Perspectives 2 (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 123.

Chapter VI

[1] Butler left England to embark on the explorations described in The Wild North Land while The Great Lone Land was still in press. It was not until he returned, seventeen months later, that he discovered, to his pleasure, that he was famous as an author (see Butler, Autobiography, p. 144).

[2] Nellie McClung, Clearing in the West (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1935), p. 104.

[3] J. G. Donkin, Trooper and Redskin (1889; rpt. Toronto: Coles Facsimile Reprint, 1973), p. 4.

[4] S. B. Steele, Forty Years in Canada (1915; rpt. Toronto: Coles Facsimile Reprint, 1973), pp. 31-32.

[5] Ibid., p. 53.

[6] Donkin, ibid., p. 7.

[7] J. F. Fraser, Canada As It Is (London: Cassell, 1911), p. 7.

[8] John Warkentin, The Western Interior of Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p. 155.

[9] G. M. Grant, Ocean to Ocean (1873; rpt. Toronto: Coles Facsimile Reprint, 1970), pp. 93, 97. Subsequent citations will be incorporated in the text, and identified by the abbreviation OTO.

[10] Pierre Berton, The National Dream, p. 48. Also, from page 47 of the same book: "The prairie, which all had read about in Butler's book, lured them on like a magnet." Berton does not give his sources for these statements. In reply to a direct query on this point, Berton wrote to the present writer that he was "not certain" where he had read of the Sandford Fleming Expedition's having taken The Great Lone Land with them on their travels through the prairies, but that "I don't think there is any doubt . . . that the two men read Butler." Having checked a number of sources, I have so far been unable to find confirmation; still to be searched, however, are Fleming's report to Parliament in 1872 on the results of his preliminary survey, and the Fleming correspondence, which Berton used but to which I have no access at the moment. Internal evidence from Ocean to Ocean strongly supports Berton's view -- particularly, Grant's correction of Butler (on page 105) of the true distance from Fort Garry to Fort Ellice.

[11] Nellie McClung, *Clearing in the West*, p. 29: "'And there are letters in the Toronto *Globe*, written by a man called White, saying there's room for millions of people in the North West . . . [sic] and you know what George McDougall said.'" McClung's elliptical statement here suggests that she was confident, in 1935, that her readers, too, would know what George McDougall said: who he was, and what he stood for.

[12] J. E. Nix, *Mission Among the Buffalo* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1960), p. 29.

[13] *Missionary Notices*, May 1, 1870. Almost the entire issue is given over to letters from missionaries in the Saskatchewan District. George McDougall's letters, covering nearly a six-month period, make up a large proportion of these. Several quotations to follow in the text are from the same letter just quoted; see footnote 14 below.

[14] Here end the quotations from George McDougall's long letter to Enoch Wood, written in the summer and fall of 1869 and published in the issue of May 1, 1870.

[15] For the details of this correspondence, see The Earl of Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains* (1875; rpt. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1969), 420-3. Wrote Woolsey politely, "I fear that your Lordship has been misinformed. . . ." This correspondence is remarkable on several counts, not the least being the promptitude with which Woolsey made his objections known. Southesk was interviewed by the *Nor'Wester* in Fort Garry in January 1860, and by the *Church of Scotland Missionary Record* on his return to Britain in early March. A paragraph from the latter publication was picked up by *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, Canada Conference in April. Both *Missionary Notices* and the *Nor'Wester* reached Woolsey in Edmonton that fall. In a letter dated October 18, 1860, Woolsey wrote to the Earl, enclosing both interviews containing the erroneous information. Southesk wrote his apologies to the Methodist Mission rooms, and also published a large part of Woolsey's letter in an Appendix to *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*.

[16] For more on Southesk and Cheadle, see below, Chapter VII.

[17] *Forty-second Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada*, June 1866-June 1867.

[18] Published as given here in *Missionary Notices*, May 1870.

[19] *Ibid*.

Chapter VII

[1] Nix, *Mission Among the Buffalo*, pp. 11-12.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] See also George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont*: on page 80, Woodcock quotes Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers*, "As [the news from Red River] was further spread by rumour all over the plains, [it] produced a state of such unrest and excitement that the business of hunting came almost to a stop." The Hudson's Bay Company men at Qu'Appelle, Woodcock goes on, "in their alarm . . . sent presents of tobacco to the friendly Cree chiefs of the region."

[4] The matter of dates is of course important to my argument here, since I wish to controvert the statement given by the editor of *Missionary Notices* (May 1870) that "at the time of writing [of all the letters published in this special issue], the news of the Red River troubles had not reached them." Lieutenant-Governor William McDougall was turned back at Pembina in early December; on December 8 Riel issued his Declaration. However, there had been forewarnings of the resistance to come since early fall, October 11 being the date of the Métis' first confrontation with the surveyors. Late December or the first week in January, therefore, hardly seems too early for rumours to have penetrated to the interior. As for John McDougall's "memory for dates," he was in the habit of keeping a day-book of baptisms, marriages, etc., with occasional notations of outstanding events. Several of these books are still extant, in the McDougall family papers now with the Glenbow-Alberta Institute.

[5] *Missionary Notices*, Nov. 1, 1870.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] W. L. Morton, ed., *Alexander Begg's Red River Journal* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1956), pp. 391-2.

[9] See John McDougall, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, p. 122: "Word that Col. Wolseley and the volunteers were coming kept up the hopes of the loyal" -- wording that certainly points to the arrival, with Butler, of Wolseley's proclamation "to the loyal inhabitants of Manitoba." Also, p. 128: "[Father] gave us the first real intelligence of the arrival of the troops and the establishing of law and government in the Red River Settlement." *George Millward McDougall* lends further support to the supposition that George McDougall was still in Fort Garry during Butler's brief stay. A letter written from Victoria Mission, dated August 16, includes the information that McDougall returned from Fort Garry in nineteen days, making it possible that he was in Fort Garry as late as the last week of July.

[10] This sentence, as is the case with a small number of others in McDougall's journal, appears to be a later interpolation.

[11] *Missionary Notices*, Nov. 1, 1871.

[12] Bruce Peel's *Bibliography of the Prairie Provinces to 1953*, entry 321, cites this publication: "Butler, [Sir William Francis]. Report by Lieut. Butler, (69th Regt.) of his journey from Fort Garry to Rocky Mountain House and back, during the winter of 1870-71. [Winnipeg? 1871?] 23 pp.

[13] *Missionary Notices*, May 1, 1873.

[14] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p. 58.

[15] *Missionary Notices*, Nov. 1856: letter dated Dec. 4, 1855.

[16] W. B. Cheadle, and Viscount Milton, *The North-West Passage by Land* (1865; rpt. Toronto: Coles Facsimile Reprint, 1970), pp. 184-186. Comparison of *The North-West Passage By land* to *Cheadle's Journal* (1931; rpt. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1971) is always instructive and often amusing, since it shows a Victorian travel writer at work, making everything ship-shape and genteel. In *Passage* we read: "Although a French Canadian, he [Lacombe] spoke English very fluently"; in the *Journal*: "[Lacombe] French Canadian & therefore could speak a little English." Also this passage from the *Journal*, *apropos* the large bands of horses, and the priest's devotion to his flock: "Left Priest busy having horses cut; very fine & fat; about 20; given as payment for absolution, &c; best horse a fine black, taken from a poor widow whose husband died unconfessed & therefore priest would not read burial service; he therefore required hard work to get him out of purgatory, for which labour the priest received the black horse!" (both passages from p. 39).

[17] Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*, pp. 167-169. One wants to keep in mind certain facts concerning western missions as a corrective to Cheadle's statement about Protestant efforts in the interior, as well as to Southesk's remark on Rome's advantage in having gentlemen instead of "vulgar, underbred folk" in their missions. There can be no doubt that the visible proofs of Lacombe's labours in the settlement at St. Albert reflected well on the Catholic mission effort, while making the Protestant one look feeble by comparison in the eyes of transient sportsmen in the west. That the Protestants, in the person of Robert Rundle, Methodist missionary to the Cree and Stoney tribes, had in fact preceded the Catholics into the Edmonton area was unknown at the time to both Southesk and Cheadle. Moreover, both men seem to have been left completely unaware of H. B. Steinhauer's mission at Whitefish Lake, which, being sixty miles north of the established H.B.C. route, did not come under their personal observation. The only representative of the Protestant

churches upon whom both these distinguished Britishers had an opportunity to form an opinion was the Englishman Thomas Woolsey, Methodist missionary at Edmonton from 1855 to 1864. Woolsey, according to John McDougall, although a kindly, well-intentioned man, was not an ideal choice for a frontier mission, by virtue of having been city-bred and therefore not trained to frontier conditions (see below, Chapter IX). For reasons of their own, the Canadian Methodists did not think it a particular advantage to have polished, highly-educated gentlemen in charge of missions among the Indians. It would appear, however, that their stock with visiting Britishers suffered accordingly.

[18] The reader may have noticed a variance between Butler's dating of this trip and George McDougall's. Butler says they left Victoria on November 25, McDougall gives November 22. The discrepancy does not carry any particular significance.

Chapter VIII

[1] See the Hurtig reprint of Ocean to Ocean, p. 167. John McDougall quoted this passage from the 1879 edition on page 241 of In the Days of the Red River Rebellion.

[2] John Maclean, McDougall of Alberta (Toronto: F. C. Stephenson, 1927), pp. 252-253.

[3] All five volumes of memoirs issued in John McDougall's lifetime were published in Toronto by the firm of William Briggs. Future references to material from any of the six volumes will be identified by abbreviations -- respectively, FLP, SSS, PPP, RRR, OWT and OGW -- and will be incorporated in the text.

[4] Selections from John McDougall's memoirs, edited and heavily emended by Thomas Bredin, have been issued by Longman Canada Ltd. under the title Parsons on the Plains (Toronto, 1971). Since Bredin has included no biographical or bibliographical information in his text, and since he has taken considerable liberties with the original texts of the memoirs, without notification or explanation, this book cannot be considered a new edition, much less a reprint. In my opinion, it should be removed from circulation in the University of Alberta library system, since it is capable of seriously misleading would-be students of McDougall's writing.

[5] W. L. Morton, ed., Alexander Begg's Red River Journal (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1956), p. 349. Morton identifies Begg's reference to "young McDougall" as "John McDougall, 1842-1917, later missionary and author." In fact, the person meant here by Begg was David McDougall, John's younger brother.

[6] Hugh Maclean, Man of Steel (Toronto: Ryerson, 1969), p. 58.

[7] Similarly, Tony Cashman's An Illustrated History of Western Canada (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1971) informs readers that the Methodists held their annual Conference for the first time in the west in 1902 -- thirty years after the meetings in Winnipeg at which John was ordained (p. 167).

[8] Hill, The Opening of the Canadian West, p. 123.

[9] J. G. MacGregor, A History of Alberta (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1972), p. 86.

[10] Berton, The Last Spike, p. 152.

[11] Gilbert Roe, The North American Buffalo (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), p. 909.

[12] Nix, Mission Among the Buffalo, p. 107.

[13] John McDougall, 'Indian Wigwams and Northern Camp-fires.' A Criticism (Toronto: Briggs, 1895), pp. 6-13. The quotations which follow here are from these pages.

[14] Ibid., pp. 13-22. The quotations which follow here are from these pages.

[15] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

Chapter IX

[1] George Young, Manitoba Memories (Toronto: Briggs, 1897), pp. 250-267.

[2] McDougall, Criticism, p. 7.

[3] See, in this connection, the 1879 edition of Ocean to Ocean, which includes the following anecdote, omitted from the 1873 edition:

> After supper, one of our party lolling lazily on a hillock, happened to stretch out his long legs between the two [visiting Indians] and the big open fire. In an undertone, the Chief called his attention to the undesigned rudeness. "Oh," said he, "they'll never mind." And certainly they smoked on and looked as tho' they saw not. "They will not say anything, but they will mind and not forget," quietly remarked Mr. McDougal. The long legs were withdrawn (OTO, Hurtig edition, p. 166).

[4] See Chapter II above.

Chapter X

[1] McClung, *ibid*., p. viii.

[2] William Kilbourn, "The Writing of Canadian History," in Eli Mandel, ed., *The Contexts of Canadian Criticism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 95.

[3] J. E. Rae, "The Roots of Prairie Society," p. 47.

[4] McDougall, *Criticism*, p. 33.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 38.

Chapter XI

[1] John Foster Fraser, *Canada As It Is*, p. 34.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 7.

[3] *Ibid*., pp. 90-91.

[4] D. M. Gordon, *Mountain and Prairie* (London: Sampson Low, 1880), p. 301.

[5] John McDougall, *Criticism*, pp. 11, 18, 27.

Chapter XII

[1] McClung, *ibid*., pp. 7-8.

[2] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, pp. 143-144.

[3] Olsen, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, *passim*. Olsen's book throws some doubt on the authenticity of this anecdote. According to Olsen (p. 111), Red Cloud was only in New York on one occasion during Butler's years in North America. This was on June 15, 1870: at which time, according to Butler's own accounts of his movements, in the autobiography and in *The Great Lone Land*, he was nowhere near New York. The autobiography (p. 121) states that he left Quebec for the west on June 8, going first to Montreal and then to Toronto, where he arrived on June 12 (p. 131). On page 48 of *GLL* we read, "On the 10th /*sic*/ of June I crossed the Detroit River from Western Canada . . . and reached the great city of Chicago on the

following day." He was travelling west, not east; so it is not clear how he was able to see Red Cloud on his way to the theatre in New York on June 15. Newspaper accounts read in Milwaukee or St. Paul are a likelier source for this anecdote.

[4] John McDougall, *Criticism*, p. 27.

[5] J. H. Riddell, *Methodism in the Middle West* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1946), p. 60.

[6] Leonard Bloomfield, *Plains Cree Texts* (1934; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1974), p. 21.

[7] Rudy Wiebe, *The Temptations of Big Bear* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), p. 48.

Chapter XIII

[1] Edward McCourt, "Prairie Literature and its Critics," pp. 160-162.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

[3] Eli Mandel, "Introduction," in Eli Mandel, ed., *Contexts of Canadian Criticism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 3.

[4] Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. ix-x.

[5] Eli Mandel, "Images of Prairie Man," in Richard Allen, ed., *A Region of the Mind*, p. 201.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

[7] J. E. Rae, "Images of the West," in David J. Bercusson, ed., *Western Perspectives 1* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), pp. 4-8. All quotations which follow immediately here are from the same brief article.

[8] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950), p. 289.

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